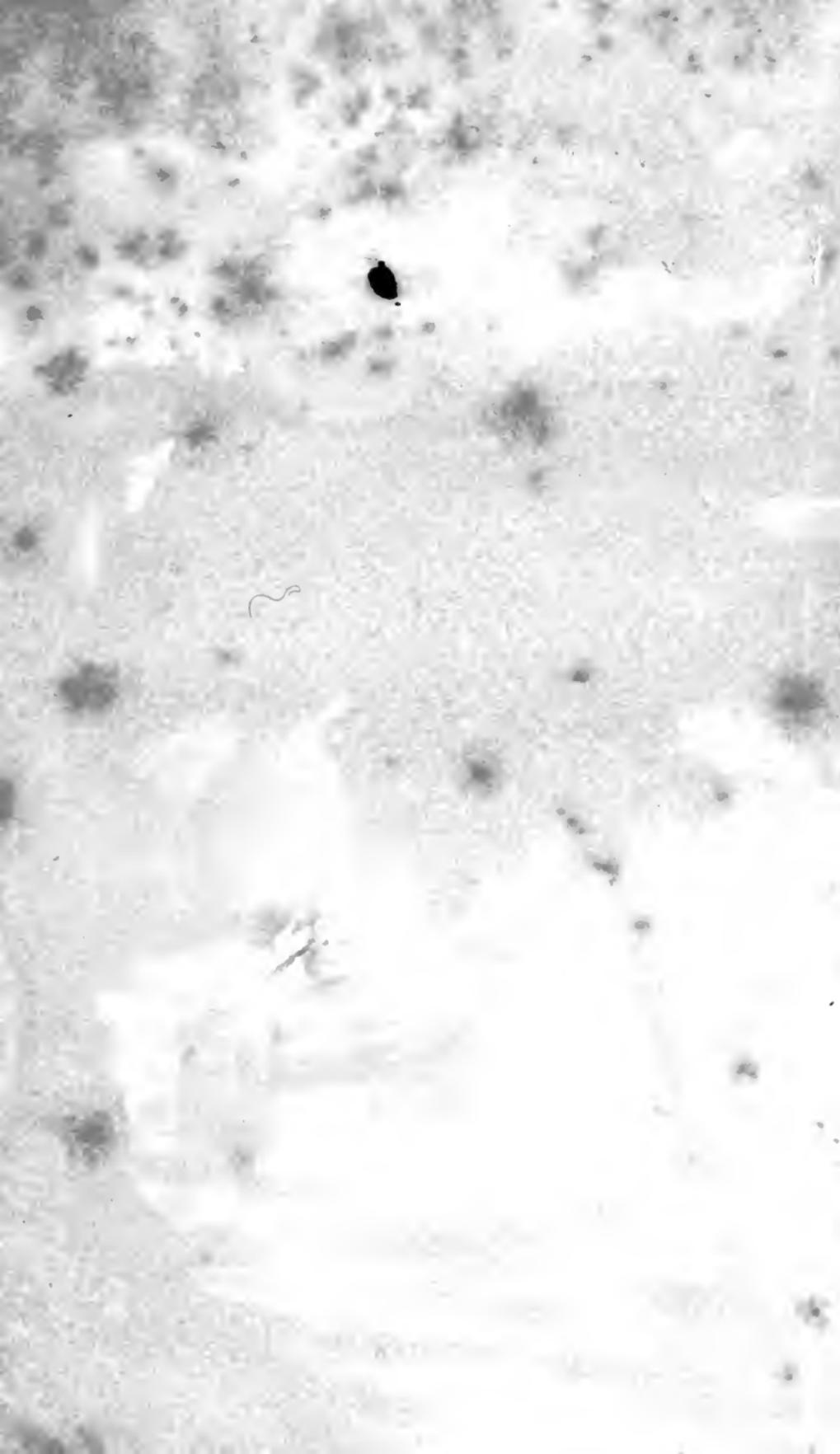




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THE
INTERNAL EVIDENCE
OF
THE HOLY BIBLE
OR
THE BIBLE PROVED FROM ITS OWN PAGES
TO BE
A DIVINE REVELATION.

By J. J. JANEWAY, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

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RECOMMENDATION.

PRINCETON, June 23d, 1845.

Reverend and Dear Brother,

I thank you for the opportunity which you have kindly afforded me of looking over your remarks on "The Internal Evidence of the Holy Bible." I have availed myself of this opportunity with real pleasure; and though constrained by my avocations, and the state of my eyes, to make my perusal more cursory than I would have wished; yet I have read enough to make me desirous that the work should be published, which I feel prepared, without hesitation, to advise. It is true that this department of the evidences of Christianity has been frequently and ably treated; but it appears to me that there is yet room for further treatment; and unless I am greatly deceived, what you have written, will be deemed, by the enlightened friends of the Bible, altogether worthy of the public eye.

You have made it appear, beyond controversy, that the spirit of the Bible, both in its doctrinal system, and in its moral code, is far more rational, pure, benevolent, and adapted to promote individual and social happiness than any other ever proposed to human acceptance. It is impossible for any thinking candid man to doubt, that any community in which that spirit should be truly and thoroughly reduced to practice, would be the happiest community in the world. From what source could such a spirit come? From imposture? from falsehood? Impossible! As well might we suppose darkness to produce light, or death life. No! Purity so unmixed, benevolence so God-like, wisdom so consum-

mate and unerring, a system in all its parts, so perfectly adapted to refine and elevate man, must have come from that infinitely great and holy Being, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh down. After all the best products of human wisdom, and human benevolence that we can collect, there is something in the Bible as much above them all, "as the heavens are higher than the earth."

In addressing this letter to you, acknowledging my pleasure in the perusal of your manuscript, and soliciting your consent to its publication, I have two motives. One is disinterested; having for its object, to promote the giving to the public, through the press, a work, which I trust will be the means of doing good long after you and I shall have gone to our eternal rest. The other is more personal, and what some would, perhaps, call selfish. It is to place a record on this humble page, which may inform my children that the beloved and venerated author of this little volume was their father's friend; and that an unbroken and confiding intercourse of nearly fifty years united us to one another, and, as we humbly trust, in sanctified fellowship, in the church of God.

That you may long continue to serve your generation by the will of God, and to enjoy the consolations of that gospel which you preach to others, is the unfeigned prayer of, my dear sir, your affectionate brother in Christ,

SAMUEL MILLER.

REV. J. J. JANEWAY, D. D.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE BIBLE claims to be a revelation from God ; given as a guide to our faith, and a rule for our conduct. It professes to furnish us with instruction which reason could not offer : to teach us the misery and danger of our condition as sinners ; how to escape that danger, and how to obtain deliverance from our misery. In a word, it professes to teach the way of life ; how we may avoid eternal death, and secure eternal life ; how from being the heirs of everlasting misery, we may become the heirs of everlasting happiness.

Can the claims of this book be sustained ? Is it a revelation from God ? Was it written under the inspiration of his Holy Spirit ? Has it authority to regulate our faith and practice ? Can it lead us in the path to heaven ? These are important questions ; worthy of the most careful investigation of every rational creature.

This book was put into our hands by our parents, who told us that it was inspired, and contained a divine revelation. In deference to their authority, we, while in our youthful days, and incapable of investigating its claims, received it as invested with the high and commanding character attributed to it by our parents.

But when the human mind is so far developed as to become capable of examining and appreciating evidence, it is no longer our duty to remain satisfied with reliance on parental judgment and authority. We are not only permitted, but required to examine for ourselves the claims of the

Bible, to regulate our faith and practice. God treats us as rational creatures. Whenever he addresses a message to us, he will doubtless accompany it with evidence sufficient to convince any candid and teachable mind, that he does really speak to us.

The claims of the Bible will bear the most rigid examination. Investigation will prove them to be well founded. Its divine authority and inspiration can be evinced by evidence of the clearest and most convincing kind. Intelligent men, in every age, have regarded the evidence as fully satisfactory ; and sufficient to render all who, through negligence, refuse to examine, or who, from love of sin, turn away from it, utterly inexcusable.

The evidence that establishes the divine authority of the Bible, is of two kinds ; *external* and *internal*.

The external evidence is derived from well authenticated miracles, from the fulfilment of prophecies, from the writings of heathen authors, and primitive Christians, and from the establishment and preservation of revealed religion in the world, amidst all the difficulties it had to encounter ; and the wonderful success of the gospel, at the commencement of its glorious career in the first centuries. A thorough examination of this department of evidence, would demand much time and extensive reading. It is worthy of the attention of those who have leisure and ability for the investigation. On this kind of evidence Christian writers have chiefly dwelt, and have exhibited it with great force and strength. Many volumes, small and large, have been published, filled with convincing and powerful reasoning. They have combatted with the enemies of the Bible, and defeated them.

The *internal* evidence of the truth of the Bible has not been overlooked ; different portions of it have been discussed with clearness and force, by able writers ; but in the author's opinion, it has not been so fully discussed as the *external*. He has never seen this class of evidence exhibited in one

comprehensive view. Yet, in his judgment, it is by far the strongest, most convincing, and best adapted to the popular mind ; and indeed to every mind that can be brought duly to examine and weigh it. Under this impression, while teaching the evidences of Christianity to the students in Rutgers College, he determined to prepare a course of lectures on the subject. In 1839, he had written five lectures, or nearly one half of this volume ; but finding, owing to the pressure of other studies on the students, no opportunity could be had for reading them to the classes, he laid aside his plan, and ceased the preparation of his intended course.

Towards the close of the last year, he was induced to resume his plan, with a view to its completion. In executing it he has confined himself strictly to the internal evidence of the divine authority of the Bible, which is derived from this blessed book itself. So incorporated is it with the sacred pages by its great Author, that it becomes more and more convincing, just in proportion as a person studies the Bible, and renders his mind familiar with its interesting contents.

All the works of God bear the impress of his adorable perfections. In creation and providence we see such plain and convincing evidence, that we cannot doubt that the heavens and the earth were the production of an infinite Being, and are upheld and governed by him to whom they owe their existence.

If the Bible is the production of infinite wisdom and goodness, it is reasonable to expect to find impressed on it marks of the Divine hand, that guided the minds of the penmen, who were employed to write its several portions. Accordingly, on a careful investigation, the signature of its divine Author will be found plainly impressed on its pages. To convince the reader of this, it is proposed to exhibit, in the following chapters, those internal evidences of the divine authority of the Bible, which will, in the writer's judgment, be the most satisfactory and convincing.

The argument will be distributed under the following heads :

- I. The Divine Plan, as exhibited in the Bible, for giving, establishing, and preserving a revelation among men.
- II. The Miracles recorded in the Bible.
- III. The fulfilment of Prophecies recorded in the Bible.
- IV. The contents of the Bible in regard to the perfections and relations of God, and the history of man.
- V. The moral code of the Bible.
- VI. The wonderful work of Redemption.
- VII. The adaptation of the Bible to the wants and necessities of fallen man.
- VIII. The beneficial influence of the Bible in forming the character and in promoting the happiness of man, and in purifying and elevating human society.

THE BIBLE A DIVINE REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

GOD'S PLAN FOR GIVING AND PRESERVING HIS REVELATION.

THE first argument in favour of the Divine authority of the Bible, is derived from *the plan exhibited in it for giving, establishing, and preserving a revelation in the world.*

To prescribe how God ought to communicate a revelation, would not become his erring and incompetent creatures. But when a book is put into our hands claiming to be his message to us, we are at liberty to inquire how it was made; whether it was communicated in a way suited to his Majesty, and corresponding to our rational nature. Let us then look at his plan as exhibited in the Scriptures.

On examination, we find the Bible to be composed of a number of smaller books; that these books were written by many different persons; that these writers came successively one after another in respect to time, and some at remote periods from each other; that their commissions from heaven were attested by very extraordinary proof; that for the preservation of God's revelation, a whole nation was selected and settled in a favourable part of the world, and watched over by

a singular and miraculous providence, for many ages, till Messiah came; and that, by the Christian revelation, a very remarkable change in the external form of Divine worship was produced. Such are the outlines of the Divine plan. Let us examine them more particularly.

SECTION I.

THE BIBLE IS COMPOSED OF A NUMBER OF SMALLER BOOKS.

In various ways God might have furnished a revelation. The book might have been prepared in heaven by the ministry of angels, and then sent down to this world duly attested; or it might have been written with his own finger, as the ten commandments were engraven by him on tables of stone. But, in making known to us his mind and will, he was pleased to employ the agency of men, writing, under the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, their assigned portions of his revelation, to be collected in due time into one volume.

SECTION II.

DIVERSITY OF THE BOOKS.

These various books, composing our Scriptures, were written in various ways, and are characterized by great variety of style.

The first five books contain a sketch of the world's history from the creation to Moses's time; laws, ceremonies, political arrangements, public addresses, and an account of the formation and erection of a tabernacle for Divine worship. The twelve books next succeeding are made up chiefly of historical details of

God's dealing, with his peculiar people. Then follows the poetical book of Job; designed to illustrate principles of Divine providence, to correct mistakes often adopted in reference to it, and to show the duty and importance of patient submission to affliction. Next come the Psalms of David, which breathe such an elevated spirit of poetry; abounding with such warm, animated, and sublime songs of praise to Jehovah; which have, for so many ages, directed, assisted, and enlivened the worship of the pious. The Psalms are followed by the writings of Solomon, replete with very valuable maxims for regulating our conduct, and furnishing his readers with a just estimate of temporal enjoyments. To all which is added a large number of books, filled with predictions, relating to the Jews, to surrounding nations, to the church, and to the world. Thus is that part of the Bible, which is denominated the Old Testament, constituted.

The New Testament is composed of several books of biography and history, a number of epistles, didactic and hortatory; and at the close, the book of Revelation, containing a prophetic history of the church and the world to the end of time. In this manner was the Bible formed.

SECTION III.

MANY WRITERS.

Individuals of various endowments, both natural and acquired, were employed as instruments for conveying God's revelation to his church.

Some, like David and Isaiah, had elevated and comprehensive minds, while others had nothing more than plain, common understandings. Some, as Moses

and Paul, were instructed in all the learning of the schools, and others were uneducated and illiterate men, taken from low and mean occupations of life.

Shepherds and kings, lawgivers and fishermen, are to be found among the inspired writers. They lived in different periods of time. Between Moses, who stands at the head of the list, and John, who is found at the close, intervened nearly sixteen hundred years. Thus remote from each other as to time, and differing as to occupations, it is obvious that, in respect to habits, views, and sentiments, they must, in several things, have differed much from one another. Yet these men, thus differing in habits of life, in sentiments, in education, in natural and acquired endowments, and thus living in different and distant periods of time, God was pleased to employ as instruments to deliver his messages of mercy and grace to the world, and to write each his assigned portion of the Bible.

Here let us pause, and review this part of God's plan. How perfectly obvious is it, that no single impostor, designing to impose a forgery on the world, would adopt this plan; requiring by the number and diversified characters of its professed writers, such variety of style, as no one man could possibly furnish! Is it not equally plain that no set of men wishing to give currency to forged writings, would have represented them as having been written in different ages, and delivered to the same people, and consequently known to that people from the date of the delivery of each portion? Attempts to propagate forged writings on such a plan, common sense would teach impostors could not possibly succeed. The total ignorance of the writings by the people, in whose possession they were, on this plan, represented to have been, would be

a public refutation of the assertions of the impostors and proclaim to all their impudent pretensions.

But such a plan of communicating a revelation, was perfectly proper to be adopted by a Being who lives through all time; who can use the style of any writer, and inspire and control any mind; and who can make messages delivered by different men, in different periods, and on different occasions, and to different generations, all to harmonize in forming one consistent and glorious system of divine truth.

SECTION IV.

ATTESTATION OF REVELATION.

The extraordinary proofs by which the commission of inspired writers was attested, constitute an important feature in the Divine plan.

They were *Miracles* and *Prophecy*.

When Moses received his commission to deliver the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, he was authorized to present miraculous signs to his countrymen to convince them of his Divine appointment, and to dispose them to accept him as their deliverer, and to confide in his power to act as such: and he was also empowered to work numerous and stupendous miracles to convince the king of Egypt of his Divine commission, to break down and subdue his proud and obstinate spirit, and finally to force from him a reluctant compliance with the Divine command, to let the enslaved people go from their cruel bondage.

When the Son of God appeared in human form on earth, to set up the Christian dispensation, his descent from heaven, and commission to act as God's ambassador extraordinary, were attested by innumerable

miracles. He opened the eyes of the blind; he unstopped the ears of the deaf; he restored the withered arm; he gave feet to the lame; he healed all manner of diseases; he raised the dead; he controled, by his word, the tempestuous wind, and the raging waves of the sea. To his miracles he appealed as convincing proof, that he had come from God. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, yet believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."*

When the Apostles were sent forth to preach the gospel, they were empowered to prove their commission, by working miracles. "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."—"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give." "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."† Not only were the Apostles enabled to prove their commission by miraculous

* John x. 24, 25, 37, 38. † Matt. x. 2, 7, 8. Heb. ii. 3, 4.

signs, but their disciples also were honoured by similar extraordinary signs of their union to Jesus Christ. "And these signs shall follow them that believe;" was the Saviour's promise; "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."^{*}

By working miracles many of the sacred writers proved that they were sent by God to deliver his messages. Others established their commission from heaven, by the fulfilment of some previously uttered prophecy; or were recognized as being inspired to deliver divine oracles, by prophets of established reputation. The prophecies contained in the Bible are very numerous; they spread through this sacred volume, from the beginning to the end. Many of them have, we believe, received an exact and wonderful accomplishment, while others remain yet to be fulfilled.

Such are the singular and very extraordinary proofs, which, according to scriptural representation, have been offered to confirm the truth of that revelation which the Bible contains. No other religion besides the Jewish and Christian religions, was ever founded on such proofs. Paganism and Mohammedanism have indeed, after their establishment in the world, talked of their miracles, and boasted of their wonders; but certainly they were not introduced to the notice of mankind by extraordinary displays of Divine power; much less did they appeal, in confirmation of their truth to miracles publicly wrought, and open to the inspection of witnesses of every description. No impostor would dare to put his pretensions to inspiration

* Mark xvi. 17, 18.

to such a test ; because it would soon expose his impiety, and prostrate all his hopes of succeeding in his attempts to impose on the credulity of mankind. Much less would an impostor have the temerity to sustain his claims to a divine commission, by plain prophecies in relation to future events manifestly beyond the reach of human foresight to be fulfilled in a short period ; because he would know that the non-fulfilment of his predictions would soon put him to shame, by proclaiming his folly and wickedness.

But the Jewish and the Christian religions were expressly sustained by miracles and prophecies. The sacred writers, in support of their claims to inspiration, boldly appealed to miracles which they wrought in open day before multitudes, and to which they challenged the attention of their enemies, as well as their friends ; and they have left on record predictions that were to be fulfilled, age after age ; and which invite the scrutiny of all who feel inclined to expose their authors, by refuting their truth.

Contemplate this singular proof. Does not the very offer carry with it presumptive evidence of the truth of the Bible, which rests its claims on proofs so far beyond the power of man, and beyond the reach of the human mind ? Would any but individuals who felt assured of being sent by Heaven, have dared to offer such credentials ? Does not this part of the plan as exhibited in the Scriptures, wear on its face the impress of Divine wisdom and power ? Such a plan accords with the power of God, which can work miracles at his pleasure, and the wisdom of God, which can utter prophecies certainly to be fulfilled at the appointed time, whether in the course of a few years, or in far distant ages.

SECTION V.

REVELATION, HOW PRESERVED.

Another constituent part of the Divine plan, is seen in the wonderful provision made for preserving every portion of revelation, as successively given to the Church.

For its preservation a whole nation was selected by God, and separated by peculiar laws from all other nations, and watched over, guarded, and defended by an extraordinary and miraculous providence. To this singular people, the descendants of Abraham, were committed the oracles of God; to be by them preserved pure and entire, and handed down from generation to generation, till Messiah should come. When he came, he entrusted the keeping of his Scriptures to the care and fidelity of the Christian Church, collected by his apostles out of all nations. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished; that Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be a witness against thee."* In like manner all other portions of the Old Testament were delivered by their authors to responsible persons of the Jewish people, for preservation. In answer to a question, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there in circumcision?" the apostle Paul replies, "Much every way: chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God."†

* Deut. xxxi. 24—26.

† Rom. iii. 1, 2.

That this people were faithful to their trust, we have ample testimony from history to satisfy us. They were indeed a rebellious and wicked nation ; relapsing, time after time, into idolatry and flagrant offences against the God of their fathers ; but they were never guilty of attempting to corrupt or mutilate his word. No such charge was ever brought against them by their prophets, who did not fail to reprove their sins in the plainest and most pungent manner. The corrupt glosses put on the sacred Scriptures by the Scribes and Pharisees, the Redeemer exposed and refuted ; but he never reproved them for corrupting or mutilating the word itself.

The Jews preserved the written word, entire and pure, with the most scrupulous care. They counted all the letters of the Old Testament, that none might be lost. Every copy of the Scriptures was carefully examined by an appointed number of their wise men.

If on examination a copy was found to have four or five faults, it was rejected and destroyed. But copies found to be correct were treated with the highest reverence. When they took these perfect copies into their hands, they kissed them with great solemnity ; and when they laid them down, they repeated the same act of high veneration.

It was, we are told by Philo and Josephus, instilled into the minds of the youth of the Jewish nation, as a principle, to run any danger, and to submit to a thousand deaths, rather than suffer any alteration or any diminution of their sacred books.*

* Howe, vol. 2, p. 462.

SECTION VI.

CHANGE IN THE MODE OF WORSHIP.

The great extraordinary change in the mode of conducting Divine worship that occurred after the advent of Jesus Christ, forms another remarkable feature in the Divine plan.

From the time of Moses till the coming of the Redeemer, the worship of the Supreme Being was conducted with many ceremonies, and with great outward pomp and splendour. In the wilderness, a tabernacle with several apartments, was, by Divine direction, constructed; and afterwards the temple at Jerusalem was built at great expense, and with the utmost magnificence, in accordance with an inspired plan delivered by David to his son Solomon. At the tabernacle first, and subsequently at the temple, all the sacrifices of the nation were required to be offered. None were allowed to be offered in any other place, under pain of Divine displeasure. For the maintenance of religion, and the conducting of Divine worship, a whole tribe was set apart; divided into Priests and Levites, to whom were assigned distinct and appropriate offices; over whom presided the High Priest, who alone was permitted to make the nearest approach to the God of Israel, annually on the great day of the atonement. Three times a year were all the males of the nation, even from the most distant parts of the land, required to assemble at the sacred city, and present themselves before God, and engage in the solemn acts of worship prescribed by the Divine law. To this ceremonial, this costly, and splendid outward worship, the Jews were habituated,

from age to age in their successive generations. It was pleasing to their eye, and gratifying to their imaginations. It addressed all their senses. Strongly attached to it, nothing could reconcile them to any change in its external splendour.

Yet, by the preaching of the gospel, and the introduction of the Christian religion, an entire change was produced in the mode of conducting the worship of Almighty God. The sacrifices were abolished. Jerusalem was no longer to be the consecrated seat of Divine service. The temple became unnecessary; its glory was departed. In any convenient place it was lawful to erect a house for worship; and every where, without looking towards the far famed city, the disciples of Christ might lift up clean hands and pure hearts, in acceptable acts of devout adoration, thanksgiving and praise. The tribe of Levi was dismissed from their long enjoyed and honourable employment of ministering to God in holy things, for the benefit of the nation. That honour was transferred to the Apostles and their successors in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Under the Christian dispensation, the worship of God is conducted with great simplicity; divested of all that outward show that attracted the veneration of a carnal people, who were fond of ceremonies that addressed their bodily senses.

Knowing that this change was appointed, our Redeemer spoke of it to the woman of Samaria. "Our fathers," said she, "worshipped in this mountain: and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus said unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship, ye know not what; we know what we

worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.”*

This great change was, we are informed, brought about by Jews, who had, from their infancy, been habituated to the splendid ritual of Moses, and the magnificent ceremonies of the temple service. So much were they under the influence of early instruction, and long and deep rooted habit, that they required repeated revelations from heaven, to free them from bondage to the law of Moses, and to incline them to maintain the liberty which Jesus Christ had imparted to his church. Taught by the Spirit the meaning of ancient prophecies and types, they saw that this remarkable change in the mode of conducting Divine worship, had been foretold; although their nation had not understood the intimations of their prophets, nor the typical nature of the Mosaic institutions.

On this point the author of the epistle to the Hebrews has thrown the clearest light. He has discussed the subject at full length, and proved that the whole Levitical service was, by infinite wisdom, designed to be typical of the worship under the Christian dispensation; and that the types, having received their fulfilment, are unnecessary, and therefore properly set aside. As a specimen, take the following quotation: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then

* John iv. 20—24.

would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."*

SECTION VII.

NO IMPOSTOR WOULD ATTEMPT SUCH A CHANGE.

How remarkable this feature in the Divine plan! Examine it. Does it not wear the impress of infinite wisdom? Surely an impostor would not have attempted to call off a people from outward forms and ceremonies to a worship, simple, pure, and spiritual. He could not have conceived the idea of such a refined mode of addressing the Supreme Being; a mode implying such correct and elevating conceptions of his adorable perfections, implying a deep conviction of the great depravity of human nature, and an encouraging view of forgiving mercy, through a glorious Mediator. Whence could he have derived such a conception?

* Hebrews x. 1—9.

Nothing like Christian worship was found in the world. The worship of all nations was addressed to the senses. In such circumstances it was not possible for an impostor to form a conception of worship so simple, pure, and holy, and offered in the name of a Mediator, so divine. The idea is manifestly of heavenly origin.

If an impostor could have formed ideas so just, so adapted to the condition of fallen man, and so consonant to the claims of a holy, righteous, and merciful God, two obstacles would have kept him from proposing and recommending such worship to the world. In the first place, it would have appeared too pure and holy to be relished by his own corrupt heart; and, in the second place, knowing how much men are under the dominion of their senses, and how attached they are to outward forms and ceremonies in religious worship, he would have entertained no hope of succeeding in establishing a divine service so entirely different from all that prevailed in the world, and so uninviting to the carnal imaginations of men, even if he had felt disposed to make the attempt.

SECTION VIII.

THE CHANGE CONSONANT TO THE WISDOM OF GOD.

Can we not see in this feature of the Divine plan, plain marks of infinite wisdom? Was not the mode of worship prescribed to Israel suited to that state of minority in which the church was before the birth of Christ? and is not the worship required by the gospel, adapted to the church in her advanced period, in which she is favoured with such superior light and privileges? The requisition for all the males to assemble three times a year, was practicable, while the

church was confined to one people; but since the church has extended her dwellings far beyond the limits of the land of Judea, it would be impracticable to comply with the requirement. Was it not then consonant to the wisdom of God, when he designed to spread the influence of true religion in many and distant parts of the world, to abolish a custom, originally wise and beneficial, but soon to become unsuitable, and to prescribe a worship more simple, more spiritual, and more suitable to his own spiritual nature? How becoming the infinite majesty of God is it for him to require sinful men to approach the throne of his grace, in the name of a Mediator appointed by himself, and to renounce all dependence on their own works, and to rely for acceptance and audience simply on the merits of Him who died for sinners, and now lives to intercede for them!

CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT.

Having gone over the particulars of the Divine plan, as exhibited in the Scriptures for giving, proving, and preserving a revelation to men, let us recall them to mind, that we may have before us a condensed view of the whole plan.

The Bible is composed of a number of smaller books;—these books were written at different periods and in different ways, and are characterized by great variety of style;—men of various endowments, both natural and acquired, living in different ages, some far remote from each other, trained to different employments, and brought under the influence of different habits, were used by God as instruments, in his hands for conveying his revelation to the children of men;—the commission of these writers was attested

by the most extraordinary proofs; proofs which He alone could furnish; by prophecies fulfilled, and miracles the most astonishing. The most wonderful provision was made for preserving and transmitting Divine revelation from age to age; a whole nation selected and separated from the rest of mankind, was constituted the *depositary* of the heavenly oracles; a people whose interests were watched over and defended by a singular, ever vigilant, and miraculous providence; and, finally, after the Mosaic economy had existed for ages, and the hearts of the people had become strongly attached to its outward forms of worship and splendid ritual, it pleased God, soon after the Saviour's advent, to introduce a great and unexpected change in conducting Divine worship; so that from being splendid and magnificent in its ceremonies and outward appearance, it became simple, refined, spiritual, and pure.

What human mind could have conceived such a plan? How far beyond the power of any man, or any association of men, the execution of such a plan! Does it not proclaim itself the conception of the infinite mind? Surely it does not accord with the ignorance and feebleness of depraved men, wishing to impose on the credulity of their fellow-men; but manifestly it does accord with the wisdom, purity, and benevolence of that infinite Being, who can enlighten and control the minds of his creatures; who lives through all time, present, past, and future; whose power sustains all nature, determines and changes its laws, when and how he pleases; and who knows how to regulate his own worship, so as best to correspond with the state and circumstances of his creatures, and with his own glorious perfections.

When this wonderful plan is attentively and carefully considered and examined, it appears impossible for any unbiased, unprejudiced mind to resist the conviction, that it is impressed with the characters of truth, and must have originated with that infinite Being from whom it professes to have proceeded. Like creation, it bears visible signatures of the wisdom and power of its glorious and divine Author.

Let it be observed, that the evidence offered in this chapter, is derived, not from assuming that miracles were wrought, nor from assuming that prophecies were fulfilled, but solely from a contemplation of the Divine plan spread out before us in the sacred Scriptures; a part of which is, that the truth of the Bible rests upon miracles and prophecies. The fact that miracles were really wrought, and prophecies really fulfilled, remains to be proved. The weight to be attributed to them, in the present stage of the discussion, is simply that they were adopted as parts of the Divine plan, and are therefore presumptive evidence of truth; because no impostor would have dared to adopt as parts of his plan for establishing the authority of a forgery in the world, the working of innumerable miracles in the most public manner, and in different ages, and the uttering of a vast variety of prophecies to be fulfilled at various times, some near to each other, and some far remote in time. The plan exhibited in the Bible accords in all its parts with the infinite mind of Jehovah; but is utterly unsuited to the mind and weakness of a human being. This plan God was able to carry on in a glorious manner; but if man had been able to conceive it, he would certainly have failed in its accomplishment.

CHAPTER II.

MIRACLES NARRATED AND WROUGHT BY MOSES.

In the preceding chapter, the Divine plan for communicating and preserving a revelation to this world, was exhibited as found in the Scriptures. Miracles were seen to form a part. The commission of the inspired writers was attested by these marvels wrought by God for the purpose. We glanced at their nature, number, and circumstances. Let us now go into an investigation of this important subject, and examine the evidence furnished in the Bible to prove that miracles were really wrought.

The first miracle which Moses showed before Pharaoh, was this; Aaron cast down his rod in the presence of the king and his servants, and it became a serpent. The magicians of Egypt attempted to vie in power with the Lord's prophet; but he triumphed over them; for we are told that "Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods."*

The next miracle was greater. Aaron "lifted up his rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt, and the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments."† But whatever they did, must have been done on a very small scale; for when the river had been turned into

* Exodus vii. 8—12.

† Ib. vii. 19—25.

blood, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt, how small a quantity of water could have been procured on which to operate with their enchantments ! and how far must the miracle of the Hebrew prophets have transcended in greatness, any thing which the magicians could achieve ! The judgment continued seven days.

The production of frogs over all the land of Egypt in such vast numbers, that they went into the houses, and bed-chambers, and on the beds, was the third miracle. The magicians imitated in some sort this miracle ; but so annoying was this calamity that Pharaoh was compelled to promise to let the people of Israel go, if Moses would intreat the Lord to take away the frogs. Accordingly the time being set, “ Moses cried to the Lord because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses ; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields ; and they gathered them together in heaps ; and the land stank.”*

The next miracle consisted in turning the dust of the land throughout all Egypt into lice, upon man and upon beast. The magicians attempted to imitate this miracle with their enchantments, but they failed ; and, compelled to acknowledge their weakness, they said to Pharaoh, “ This is the finger of God.”† And had we been present, witnessing the displays of power by Moses and Aaron, and compared the extent and greatness of the wonders wrought by them, with the trifling imitations attempted by their feeble and vanquished competitors ; should we not have acknowledged the power of the God of Israel, and believed

* Exodus viii. 1—14.

† Ib. viii. 16—19.

that Moses and Aaron were only instruments in his hands for doing these marvels?

In the succeeding miraculous judgments, a distinction was made between the Egyptians and the Israelites: they were inflicted on the former, and not on the latter.

When the swarms of flies were threatened, God said, “I will sever in that day the land of Goshen in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end that thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth; and I will put a division between my people and thy people: to-morrow shall this sign be; and the Lord did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt; and the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.* At the intercession of Moses this calamity was removed.†

By the next judgment the cattle of the Egyptians were destroyed, but not one belonging to Israel died; and when the king sent to inquire he found it so.‡

Again, when Moses “sprinkled the ashes of the furnace up toward heaven,” it became a boil, breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, and the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.§

Then came the terrible storm of thunder, hail, and fire, which was more dreadful than any thing that had ever occurred in Egypt; but “in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was no hail.”|| Again at the intercession of Moses this judgment

* Exodus viii. 20—24. † Ib. ix. 3—7. || Ib. ix. 22—26.
 ‡ Ib. viii. 25—31. § Ib. ix. 8—11.

ceased.* Passing by the next calamity, that of the locusts which so terribly desolated the land, and was removed at the intercession of Moses,† let us consider the miracle by which darkness was brought over the land of Egypt. It was a thick, palpable darkness; a darkness so great that the Egyptians could not see each other, nor attend to their common business. They were compelled to remain unoccupied in their places for three days, during which time the darkness continued. But while this terrible darkness grievously afflicted the Egyptians, the Israelites enjoyed the light of heaven in all their dwellings.‡

All these successive judgments, severe and painful as they were, proved insufficient to humble the proud, obstinate heart of Egypt's king. Jehovah, the God of Israel, determined to inflict one more, which he knew would extort from him an unwilling consent to let the oppressed go free. But previously he instituted the passover; which was designed to remind his people, in all future generations, of their protection, in that dreadful night in which the strength of Egypt was broken.

While the Israelites were, in obedience to Divine direction, eating the paschal-lamb, "at midnight, the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up at night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt: for there was not a house where there was not one dead."§ But in this tremendous slaughter, the chil-

* Exodus ix. 27—34.

† Ib. x. 21—23.

‡ Ib. x. 12—19

§ Ib. xii. 29, 30.

dren of Israel were safe. No first-born in their dwellings perished; because their dwellings were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal-lamb, according to Divine direction. "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."*

This terrible judgment proved effectual. The proud heart of the obstinate and hardened king was abased. Calling for Moses and Aaron by night, he said, "Rise up, and get ye forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men."†

Such were the miracles which Moses and Aaron wrought in effecting the deliverance of Israel from bondage. Pharaoh and the Egyptians, it is plain from the narrative, regarded them as miracles: and if we had been present at the time to witness such wonderful events, could we have resisted the conviction, that they were the works of that Almighty power to which all the laws of nature submit, and by which they are sustained, controlled, and changed at pleasure?

In this stage of the argument, let it be distinctly observed, I do not take for granted, that these miracles were really wrought. We only wish the nature of these singular occurrences to be observed, in connexion with the circumstances in which they appeared, just as they are stated in the narrative of Moses. The

* Exodus xii. 13.

† Ib. xii. 31—33.

proof of their reality is yet to be exhibited. But what we request the reader to reflect on is this: whether, on the supposition that these events really occurred as narrated by Moses, he can entertain a doubt that they were genuine miracles, produced by the Almighty to effect the deliverance of his chosen people from cruel bondage to the Egyptians.

New wonders succeeded those we have just noticed. On the march of Israel from Egypt, Jehovah became their guide: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."* In this miraculous manner were the tribes of Israel led, during all their wanderings in the wilderness, through the space of forty years.

Repenting that they had let Israel go, Pharaoh and his servants assembled in haste an army, and went in pursuit of them, to reduce them to that state of bondage from which they had been released. They found them encamped at the Red Sea. Terrified at the sight of their former masters approaching in hostile array, "The children of Israel cried out unto the Lord." They murmured against Moses; who, in reply to their ungrateful and unbelieving complaints, said, "Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."† Accordingly preparation is made for the fulfilment of this pro-

* Exodus xiii. 21, 22.

† Ib. xiv. 10—14.

mise. The clouds assume a new position. “The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them: and the pillar of cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.”*

In defiance of past judgments and of present appearances of Divine interposition in favour of Israel, the infatuated king of Egypt dared to pursue them into the passage made for their escape through the sea. But how vain his mad design! “The Lord troubled the hosts of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them heavily.” At his command, “Moses stretched forth his hand, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared.”† The hosts of Pharaoh see their folly. In vain they attempt to retreat from their impious pursuit. They are overwhelmed and drowned in the sea.

The sacred writer ascribes the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea to the power of Almighty God, interposing for the deliverance of his chosen people, and for the destruction of their enemies. A strong east wind was indeed employed to drive the sea

* Exodus xiv. 15—22.

† Ib. xiv. 23—25.

back; but no wind could pile up the waters like two walls on both sides of the Israelites. The waters were divided, when Moses, the Lord's servant, stretched out his hand; and when he stretched it out again, the waters returned to their former state, and overwhelmed and destroyed the Egyptians.

By these various interpositions of Jehovah, the Israelites were effectually delivered out of the hands of their cruel masters. They constituted a vast multitude; amounting in all to three millions of human beings. They are now in the wilderness: How are they to be sustained? Whence will they obtain the necessary food? The Lord will not forsake them; he will provide. A new scene of wonders opens. Manna descends from heaven every morning except the Sabbath. On this heavenly food, the Israelites feed and are sustained forty years. It ceased not to descend till they had entered the land of promise, and could obtain its fruits for their support.

Passing by other miracles, let us look at the miracle wrought at mount Sinai. Before this mount Israel encamped; and while there Jehovah was pleased to exhibit his glory to them. They were instructed to prepare to meet God. On the third day "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace; and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and

waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount : and Moses went up.”*

In such circumstances of awful grandeur, and with such terrific displays of his divine majesty, Jehovah delivered, in an audible voice, the ten commandments ; which he was pleased afterwards to engrave on two tables of stone, and give them to Moses for his people. Not a doubt could remain on the mind of a single Israelite that here a miracle was wrought, and that God was present.

In all their journeys in the wilderness, the chosen tribes were guided by a standing miracle. We have noticed already the pillar of a cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. At the erection of the tabernacle these pillars assumed a new position. “On the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony ; and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed ; and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched : as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long on the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the

cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed." So particular is Moses in his narrative of this miracle; and still more particular, as you will find by turning to the ninth chapter of Numbers.

CHAPTER III.

ARGUMENTS ON THESE MIRACLES.

OMITTING notice of the other miracles narrated by the Hebrew leader, we proceed, to make remarks on those we have selected.

SECTION I.

REMARKS.

1. If these events actually occurred, at the time, and in the circumstances, stated in the narrative, then they must have been *miraculous*; real interpositions of Divine power, out of the order of nature, by Jehovah, the God of Israel, to establish the mission of his servant Moses, and to fulfil his promises to his chosen people. It is utterly impossible to explain them by natural causes. No one witnessing such events, in connexion with the time and circumstances, could resist the conviction, that they were produced by a Divine power, operating out of the ordinary course of nature, and designed to be, what they are denominated, *miraculous* events. They were of such a nature

that their character could not be mistaken. If they were not miracles, miracles can never be wrought. It only requires an examination of them to be convinced of the truth of this remark.

2. These miracles were wrought before competent witnesses.

They were exhibited in open day, not privately, but in the most public manner; not in the presence of a few selected individuals, but in the presence of vast multitudes; before *enemies* as well as friends. The Egyptians saw and felt them. The proud and obstinate king was compelled by them to acknowledge the hand of the Almighty, and to let his oppressed slaves go free. Israel saw and rejoiced in Jehovah's signal interposition in their favour; and when He had carried them safely through the Red Sea, and placed them beyond the power of their pursuing masters, they sang his praises. Two nations witnessed these wonderful events.* With the aid of his magicians, the king of Egypt tried hard to disprove the miracles. But both he and they were compelled to abandon the vain attempt. They saw and acknowledged the finger of God. Pharaoh was influenced by the strongest motives to resist these miracles. He felt that the power and glory of his kingdom were concerned. He did resist long and obstinately. He was extremely unwilling to let the enslaved Israelites depart. Most reluctantly did he consent at last to let them go; and, by so doing he gave the fullest proof that he believed the events that terrified him, and desolated his kingdom, were produced by the power of Israel's God, for the express purpose of humbling his proud heart,

* Exodus xv.

and compelling him to release them from his tyrannical oppression.

3. These miracles were wrought for an important end.

Reason forbids us to expect miracles to be wrought on trifling occasions. If God interpose in a miraculous manner, it must be to accomplish something worthy of his interposition. And why were the miracles under review wrought? To this question a distinct answer is given by Moses. It was to fulfil the covenant engagements into which Jehovah had condescended to enter with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the illustrious fathers of Israel; it was to deliver his chosen people from cruel bondage; it was to establish true religion among that people; it was to make them the depositary of his heavenly oracles; it was to set up and maintain his worship in opposition to idol worship, in the world; it was to make known his great name in all the earth. Such, according to Moses' statement, was the design of these great and long continued miracles. And surely no one can deny that the accomplishment of such a design furnished ample reason for a miraculous display of Almighty power.*

4. The record of these miracles was written by Moses, while the witnesses were still living, and while some of the miracles were still exhibited before their eyes.

Had the record stated that they had occurred ages before; had it been written long after the witnesses had slept in the grave; it would have merited very little regard. It was far otherwise. The record was made at the time of these wonderful occurrences, and presented to that very people who had seen and heard

* Exodus iii. 1—18.

the signal and miraculous displays of divine power described. To them the sacred historian appealed in support of the truth of his narration. “And know ye this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his outstretched arm, and the miracles, and the acts which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place;—and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel: but your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did.”*

5. If the Israelites, who were witnesses, believed these miracles, then it is reasonable that all to whom their testimony comes, should believe them to be true miracles.

They were competent witnesses. The miracles were of such a nature as to require in these witnesses nothing more than the exercise of sound bodily senses, and of common understanding. In relation to such events, an uneducated man could give as good a testimony, as a learned man. He could testify in regard to the judgments that desolated Egypt; he could testify in regard to the passage through the Red Sea; he

* Deuteronomy xi. 2—7.

could testify to the terrific displays of Divine majesty at mount Sinai, to the food on which the people fed in the wilderness, and the appearance and movements of the cloud, by which their journeying and resting were regulated. A man of common sense and sound bodily senses, could not be deceived in respect to such events: and it was utterly impossible for a whole nation to be deceived by miracles that were seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears; some of which were daily occurring for a long course of years.

Now, if we have the testimony of a whole nation, of three millions of people, to events in regard to which they neither were nor could be deceived, is it not worthy of all credit? Why should we hesitate to receive it? *Hume* replies, “such testimony ought to be rejected; because *miracles are contrary to experience.*” Contrary to experience! Whose experience? The experience of Mr. Hume? And is his experience the test of truth? Can nothing be true which he has not experienced? Shall his eyes and ears be constituted the sole vouchers of truth? If Mr. Hume does not mean his personal experience, whose experience does he mean? The experience of men of the age in which he lived? How can the fact that they never saw miracles wrought, be brought forward as proof that men who lived in the ages before they were born, never witnessed miracles? With equal propriety might it be affirmed, that the latter could not see and hear things which the former did not see nor hear; and thus with one dash of the pen might be blotted out the entire history of past events!

But does the philosopher, by experience, mean *universal experience?* Does he intend to say, that no man ever saw a miracle? This would be a philoso-

phical argument indeed ! It would be substituting the *dictum*, the mere assertion of an infidel writer for proof ! If we take it for granted that no man ever saw a miracle, why then all reasoning is useless.

But Moses, who lived many ages before Hume was born, affirms that, by the power of the God of Israel, he was enabled to work many and great miracles, in attestation of his mission to effect the emancipation of that people from Egyptian bondage. In proof of his miracles, of which he gives a particular account, he adduces the testimony of a whole nation ; whom he delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh, led through the Red Sea, and conducted in their journeys in the wilderness forty years, till they reached the borders of the promised land. Now, to set aside the testimony of this whole people, and to confute Moses, by affirming miracles to be contrary to experience, and that no man ever saw a miracle, is ridiculous in the extreme.

The great question to be decided is this : Did the Israelites really receive the writings of Moses as containing true history, and really believe the miracles which he records as having been exhibited before their eyes ? If they did, then we have their testimony to the truth of these miracles ; and it is perfectly reasonable in us to receive their testimony, and to believe that these miracles were really wrought by Moses.

SECTION II.

A FACT ASSUMED.

Now, to settle this great question, we assume what no one can deny, that the writings of Moses have been, in ages past, and are, at this day, received, both

by Jews and Christians, as true and inspired writings. How is this indisputable fact to be accounted for? Why have these writings of the Jewish lawgiver been thus honoured? No true solution of this question can be given, unless we admit that the generation of Israelites who were contemporary with Moses, and were led by him to the borders of the promised land, really received him as divinely commissioned to effect their deliverance, on the ground of the miracles he wrought before their eyes.

Either they did thus accredit him or they did not.

SECTION III.

REASONING ON THE SUPPOSITION THAT MOSES'S WRITINGS WERE RECEIVED BY HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

If they did thus accredit him, then all that is stated in the Mosaic history, is natural. "Moses and Aaron," it is written, "went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."* How natural! The elders could not resist the evidence of the miracles; they believed that Moses was commissioned by God to effect their emancipation; they were willing to put themselves under his conduct, and to leave the house of their bondage.

It was, however, the design of God to try their

* Exodus iv. 29—31.

faith, and not to deliver them till their bondage became more intolerable, and their faith strengthened, by displays of new and greater wonders of his power. Pharaoh will not obey the command of the Most High. He sets himself in opposition to his will; and proudly replies, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."* He increased their oppression, by requiring the same amount of bricks, while straw was refused for making them. The officers of the children of Israel set over them by their task-masters, were beaten, because the people had failed to accomplish their impracticable task. They sought redress from the tyrant king, but were spurned from his presence, and ordered to repair to their work. In these circumstances, meeting, on their return, with Moses and Aaron, they exclaimed, in the anguish of their hearts, "The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us."† Was not this natural?

But the desolating judgments inflicted on Egypt, and the protection afforded to the children of Israel, soon revived their spirits, and convinced them that Jehovah was stretching out his mighty hand for their deliverance. On the eve of their departure, Moses, by Divine direction, instituted the passover, as a commemorative ordinance of what was shortly to happen; and commanded the people to prepare for it, and to borrow of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. The people were obedient, and looked for the promised deliverance.‡

* Exodus v. 2.

† Ib. v. 20, 21.

‡ Ib. xi. 2, 3.

For wise and holy reasons, as well as to punish the unbelief of his people, God was pleased, after he had saved them from the pursuing Egyptians, by opening for them a passage through the Red Sea, to keep them wandering in the wilderness, forty years.

Now, if the miracles, narrated by Moses, were really wrought; if the Israelites were witnesses of the judgments that compelled Pharaoh to let them depart; if they really went through the Red Sea on dry ground, while the waters were piled up like two walls on both sides; if they beheld the terrific displays of Divine majesty on mount Sinai; if they felt the ground trembling under their feet, and quaked at the sound of the mighty trumpet, waxing louder and louder; if they were fed with manna in the wilderness, and drank of the water from the smitten rock that followed them in their wanderings; if they were directed when to journey, and when to pitch their tents, by the movements of the miraculous cloud; if their feet did not swell, nor their garments wax old: then it is seen how such a multitude of people could be sustained, while destitute of the ordinary productions of the earth; then the chosen tribes could not resist the evidence continually before their eyes of a divine and miraculous interposition in their favour; then Moses could, as he did, boldly appeal to the miracles they had seen in Egypt and in the wilderness; and the people were prepared to believe his words, and to receive all the laws, and ceremonies, and institutions, and feasts which he announced as divinely appointed.

In perfect correspondence with such a conviction resting on the minds of the Israelites, Moses addresses them, and boldly appeals to the miracles wrought, and which he was assured none could deny. "And

Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep them, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, who are all of us alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire; and went not up into the mount,) saying.* Having repeated the ten commandments, Moses adds, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; and ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath showed us his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? for this fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me;

* Deuteronomy v. 1—5.

and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.”*

Moses exhorting the Israelites to obey the divine commandments, urges especially their duty to their children: “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”† “And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, ‘What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?’ then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: and the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, *before our eyes*; and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.”‡ Again, in the 29th chapter of Deuteronomy, where an account is given of the covenant made at Moab, Moses appeals to the knowledge of the people: “Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations

* Deut. v. 22—28.

† Ib. vi. 1—9.

‡ Ib. vi. 20—24.

which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles. Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe hath not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the Lord your God.”*

Now on the supposition we have made that these miracles of Moses were really wrought, all this is perfectly natural. Moses could feel no hesitation in making his appeals to the knowledge of the people he addressed. He felt conscious he was speaking the truth; and he knew that no one could call in question his statements. All is natural. These addresses of the Jewish lawgiver carry the appearance of truth. No impostor would dare to interweave his writings with such bold appeals to the knowledge of those whom he addressed. If he did, how could he hope to escape detection?

The generation of Israel who had witnessed all these miracles, and to whose personal knowledge Moses thus appeals, acknowledged of course his divine commission, and received his writings as inspired and revealing the will of God. They would naturally be led to speak to their children of the wonders they had seen. To be silent on the subject was not possible; they could not suffer their children to grow up in utter ignorance of the wonders God had wrought, in effecting their deliverance from a cruel and degrading bondage, and in putting them in possession of the promised land.

* Deuteronomy xxix. 1—6.

Yet there was room for exhortation and precept in regard to this matter. The Israelites could not be silent here: they would tell their children the wonders they had seen. But they might fail in diligence, and in taking pains to point out to their children the connexion between these miracles and the divine institutions. Hence Moses felt it necessary to press this duty in his exhortations. To aid parents in discharging their duty, and to assist those whose office it was to teach the people, he wrote a succinct and accurate history of the Lord's dealings with them; and to keep alive the remembrance of these things in all future generations, the recollection of them was interwoven with the ceremony of presenting annually the first fruits of the land. On that occasion the Israelites were required to say: "A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: and he brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me."*

All appearances go to establish the supposition as true, that the Israelites saw and believed the miracles

* Deuteronomy xxvi. 5—10.

recorded by Moses, and which he reminds them again and again that they had witnessed.

SECTION IV.

FORCE OF THE ISRAELITES' ARGUMENT.

In the preceding section it was shown, that the generation of Israelites who had witnessed Jehovah's miracles, would certainly tell them to the next generation. The great and unusual force of their testimony is worthy of special notice; for it was the testimony not of a few or many competent witnesses, but of a *whole nation*.

All had seen at least some of the miracles. All had beheld the miraculous appearance of God on mount Sinai. All had heard his voice uttering the ten commandments. All had felt the ground trembling under their feet. All were terrified by the displays of Divine majesty. Not one of the whole nation could resist the evidence which the Almighty gave of his presence. All saw and tasted the manna on which they subsisted. No one could doubt of being fed miraculously by this heavenly food, any more than we can doubt of being fed by the ordinary productions of the earth. The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, and its movements, were seen by all; and every individual of the nation had personal evidence that their journeyings and restings were regulated by this miraculous symbol of the Divine presence.

Such a testimony, thus delivered by a whole nation in regard to events about which there could be no deception, no mistake, was irresistible. The generation

of Israel to whom it was delivered could not reject it. It was a moral impossibility. They received it with full assurance. They certainly believed all the miracles related by their fathers; they acknowledged the divine mission of Moses; they submitted to him as their lawgiver, appointed to that office by God himself, and received all his writings as inspired.

No event in the history of our nation is supported by equal evidence. That, on the *fourth* day of July in the year of our Lord seventeen hundred and seventy-six, the old Congress signed, in their Hall at Philadelphia, the declaration of American independence, no one doubts. And what is the evidence that satisfies the minds of all of the glorious fact? All our fathers were not present to witness the signing of that noble and patriotic document. Only a small number could see the transaction. Yet on the testimony of this small number, and of the members of Congress who did sign, we are assured of the fact. We no more doubt it, than we should, if we ourselves had been present, and had seen the illustrious deed with our own eyes. How then could that generation of Israel to whom the miracles of Moses were reported, admit a doubt in regard to things which all their fathers assured them they had seen with their own eyes, heard with their own ears, and tasted with their own mouths?

To these conclusions we are necessarily brought, by admitting the miracles of Moses to have been real, and that he was duly accredited as their divinely appointed leader and lawgiver, by his contemporaries.

SECTION V.

REASONING ON THE OPPOSITE SUPPOSITION.

Let us now take the opposite supposition. Let us suppose that Moses was not thus accredited, and that he wrought no miracles; and see what will follow. It will then follow that he did not emancipate Israel from Egyptian bondage, nor conduct them through the wilderness, to the borders of the promised land, nor sustain them forty years in the wilderness, as narrated in his writings. On this supposition it is impossible to account for the fact of his being since accredited as their leader and lawgiver, and of his miracles being believed as real both by Jews and Christians. Indeed, if his writings were not received, by his contemporaries, as inspired, on the ground of his miracles establishing his character and commission from heaven, they never could have gained credit in the world. Select any period of time, any generation of Israel, and it can be shown *conclusively*, that, on the supposition now made, they never could have been palmed on the world as genuine and inspired.

Let us take the generation next succeeding his time. It will then follow on the supposition made, that when his writings appeared, they were entirely ignorant of all the wonders recorded in them. They had heard nothing of the desolating judgments on Egypt; nothing of the passage of their fathers through the Red Sea; nothing of their sojourning in the wilderness, forty years, and of their miraculous support by manna during that long time; nothing of

the wonderful manner in which the law was given from mount Sinai; nothing of the erection of the tabernacle by divine direction; nothing of the wonderful cloud by which they had been guided in all their journeys through the wilderness. Yet when they read these writings they find it asserted that they had been delivered to their fathers; that their fathers had been perfectly acquainted with all the miracles recorded in them; that they had really been emancipated from Egyptian bondage, by the judgments inflicted by heaven, through the instrumentality of Moses; conducted by him through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness, and sustained and guided in the miraculous manner narrated; and that their fathers had been commanded by God to tell these wonderful things to their children, and diligently to teach them the testimonies, and statutes, and judgments delivered to them by his servant Moses. Yet their fathers had never spoken to them of these wonderful things; they are utterly unacquainted with them!

In such circumstances of utter ignorance, was it possible for these writings, which imply their knowledge of them, to gain credit? Was it not requiring people to believe they had heard what they had not heard,—knew what they did not know,—and observed facts which they had not observed? or to believe their fathers had witnessed the most astonishing and miraculous events, in which they and their children had the deepest interest; and yet, in opposition to every principle of human nature, and to the express command of Almighty God, had observed a profound silence? to believe their fathers were in possession of these inspired writings, and yet had cruelly concealed

them from their children? Would an impostor have been so infatuated, as to attempt to impose on any people such writings? Would he have been fool enough so to frame his story, as to involve the supposition that those whom he wished to deceive, actually knew what both he and they were perfectly certain they did not know? A story so superlatively foolish could not obtain credit from the most credulous. The bold appeals of Moses to the personal knowledge of those whom he addressed, could be adopted only by one who felt conscious he was speaking the truth, and who knew certainly his hearers could not deny his statements.

SECTION VI.

ILLUSTRATION.

Let us illustrate this argument by referring to events in the history of our own country. The union of the colonies in opposition to the arbitrary laws of the mother country,—the formation of a Congress to represent the colonies,—the declaration of independence by that Congress,—the appointment of George Washington as commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States of America,—the capture of Burgoyne, and his army at Saratoga,—the arduous struggle that was carried on seven years against the armies and navy of Great Britain,—the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his army, at Yorktown, Virginia;—are all events in our history well known, and which being true could not fail to be known to the children of the revolutionary patriots and heroes. No one entertains

any doubt of facts so notorious and so substantiated. They will be handed down from generation to generation, so long as this nation shall continue to exist.

Now, let us suppose these events had never occurred; that we had not been colonies of Great Britain; that no declaration of independence had been made by Congress; that no war of liberty had been carried on seven years; that George Washington had not been appointed commander-in-chief of our armies; that neither the army of Burgoyne, nor the army of Cornwallis, had been captured; and consequently that we had never heard of these remarkable events. Further, let us suppose that a person, undertaking to write a history of this nation, should incorporate these events as real parts of our history, would it be possible for him to gain credit? We open the volume; we read a very surprising narrative; we read of events we never heard of before; events of such a character that, if they were true, we should certainly be familiar with them; but of which we have lived in utter ignorance. Assuredly such a story, implying knowledge we do not possess, could never gain credit. The writer would meet with merited and universal reprobation for his barefaced impudence.

Would such be the result of an attempt to impose on us as portions of our history facts that had never occurred, and of which we were entirely ignorant? And when we consider the structure of the Mosaic history, the knowledge it implies in the historian's contemporaries, and in all succeeding generations, can we doubt the impossibility of its being imposed, at any period, on any generation, if it had been false?

SECTION VII.

CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT.

Thus, from the indisputable fact that the writings of Moses have been, for ages, and still are, received, by Jews and Christians, as genuine, true, and inspired documents, we reason in favour of their truth and divine authority. Admitting them to be what they claim to be, all is natural; the miracles he records were true miracles; they were seen by the Israelites whom he led out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness; and Moses could, with perfect confidence, appeal to their knowledge of all the signal and miraculous interpositions of God in their favour. But, on the supposition that his writings are not true, and his recorded miracles false, it is impossible to account for the undeniable fact, that his writings have been and are received as inspired and true, and his recorded miracles as real miracles. On this supposition they could never have gained credit.

Thus we are compelled to believe, that the Mosaic history was received as true by the writer's contemporaries, on the ground of the miracles which he records, and which they had seen and witnessed, as the only way to account for the fact that this history and its recorded miracles are now, and have been for ages past, received as true, both by Jews and by Christians. We have then the testimony of a whole nation to the wonderful and numerous miracles recorded by Moses, as wrought for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and their final settlement in the land promised by God to their fathers.

CHAPTER IV.

MIRACLES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

As Jehovah had ushered into the world the commencement of his revelation in a manner so wonderful, and established the mission and character of the first writer of the Bible, by miracles so astonishing ; it was unnecessary to accompany the mission of subsequent prophets with the same overwhelming evidence. The working of one or two miracles or the fulfilment of a prediction previously delivered, was sufficient to establish the reputation of a prophet, in the view of a people for whom God had done such wonders, and whom Moses had taught to expect a succession of inspired teachers and prophets ; and especially to look for the coming of that great Prophet to whom was to be the gathering of the people.

When this great and long promised Prophet came, a new and brighter scene opened on the world. Miracles more numerous and of greater variety were exhibited to attest the mission of Messiah, the Son of the living God ; and afterwards the mission of the Apostles whom he sent forth to preach his gospel, and to establish his kingdom among all nations.

Let us examine these miracles.

The very first which our Lord wrought, was indisputable. At a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, when the wine had failed, he changed a large quantity of water into wine of so excellent a quality as to call forth the marked commendation of the ruler of the feast, who, at the time, was ignorant of the miracle

by which it had been produced.* At a pool in Jerusalem, called Bethesda, Jesus healed an impotent man of an infirmity under which he had laboured thirty-eight years, and the cure of which he in vain sought at this pool. To this unhappy man, Jesus said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked."† On one occasion, with only five loaves of bread and two small fishes, he fed five thousand men; and there remained twelve baskets of fragments: and on another, with seven loaves and a few little fishes, he fed four thousand men, besides women and children; and there remained seven baskets full.‡

At Jerusalem Jesus opened the eyes of a man who had been born blind. This miracle was critically examined by the Jews, and could not be denied by them.§ Moreover our Saviour healed all manner of diseases. He gave feet to the lame; he unstopped the ears of the deaf; he loosed the tongue of the dumb; he opened the eyes of the blind. He walked upon the sea; he rebuked the winds and the waves, and they obeyed him; the tempest ceased, the waves were settled. He gave life to the dead. Taking by the hand the daughter of Jairus, ruler of a Jewish synagogue, he said, "Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished."|| He also raised from the dead a young man of the city of Nain. Of this miracle we have the following account: "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow:

* John ii. 1—11.

† John vi. 5—13. Matt. xv. 32—38.

‡ Ib. v. 2—9.

§ John ix. 1—38. || Luke viii. 54—56.

and much people of the city followed with her. And when the Lord saw her he had compassion on her, and said to her, Weep not. And he came, and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great Prophet is risen up among us; and that God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went out throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.* At the grave of Lazarus, who had been dead and buried four days, and in the presence of many Jews, Jesus stood and “called with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.”†

In Matthew we find this record: “And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.”‡

In confirmation of their commission from Jesus Christ to preach his gospel, the Apostles were empow-

* Luke vii. 11—17.

† John xi. 30—46.

‡ Matt. xiv. 34—36. See also Luke vi. 17—19.

ered by him to work miracles. Miracles were their credentials to be read of all men. "Then called he his twelve Apostles together, and he gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases."* Subsequently our Lord appointed seventy other disciples, to whom also he imparted the power of working miracles in attestation of their commission from him. He "sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come :" and when they returned they said with joy, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."†

The power of working miracles was still further extended. Not a few disciples, gained by the preaching of the Apostles, received this gift. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."‡

The miracles wrought by the apostle Peter were numerous and great. To a man lame from his birth, and lying at the gate of the temple, he said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I unto thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up, and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and anklebones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple,

* Luke ix. 1.

† Ib. x. 1—17.

‡ Mark xvi. 15—18.

walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.”* The next day, the Jewish rulers and elders, the high priest, and his kindred, having arraigned Peter and John before them, demanded, “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole.”†

The miracles wrought by Peter were signal and numerous. Such an idea of his power was entertained by the people, “that they brought the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds, and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.”‡ At Joppa a very benevolent woman who had done much for poor widows, died; and as Peter was at Lydda, a short distance from Joppa, the disciples sent for him. He went, and when he saw the dead body of this woman laid in an upper chamber, he “kneeled down and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she

* Acts iii. 1—10.

† Ib. iv. 1—10.

‡ Ib. v. 12—16.

saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.”*

Of the Apostles generally it is said, “And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.”† In regard to Stephen, a deacon, it is recorded, “Stephen, full of faith and power did great wonders and miracles among the people.”‡ “Philip, the evangelist, went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city.”§

The apostle Paul was signally honoured by the power of working miracles. In the isle of Paphos, Elymas, a sorcerer withstood Paul and Barnabas, seeking to turn away Sergius Paulus, a Roman deputy, from the faith. Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, “O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy,

* Acts ix. 32—42.

† Ib. v. 12.

‡ Acts vi. 8

§ Ib. viii. 5—8.

when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.”* At Lystra, “there was a man impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. The same heard Paul speak; who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. “And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.”† At Ephesus, Paul laid his hands on certain disciples, and “the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” In that city the Apostle continued about two years preaching the gospel; and the sacred historian informs us that “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”‡

“Truly,” says Paul to the Corinthians, “the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds;”§ and to the Romans, “I will not dare to speak of those things which God hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that, from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”||

* Acts xiii. 6—12. † Acts xix. 1—12. || Rom. xv. 18, 19.

‡ Ib. xiv. 6—11. § 2 Cor. xii. 12.

SECTION II.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

In the preceding section we have given a brief account of the miracles narrated in the New Testament. We have dwelt somewhat on them; because it is important to the argument to be founded on them, that the circumstances in which they were wrought should be observed. Before proceeding, however, it will be proper to notice that great miracle by which the apostles were qualified to enter on the discharge of their high and honourable office of preaching the gospel. No better account of it can be given than in the language of the sacred historian. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold are not all these which speak Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphy-

lia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?"*

CHAPTER V.

ARGUMENT ON THESE MIRACLES.

SECTION I.

REMARKS.

On these miracles the following remarks are submitted.

1. If the wonderful things recited were done, then real miracles were wrought.

To define a miracle is unnecessary. These things were so evidently beyond the operation of second causes, that any one witnessing them would readily attribute them to divine interposition, and acknowledge the instrument to be divinely commissioned. The language of Nicodemus was the language of truth and of common sense: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him."†

2. These miracles were wrought in public, and before many competent witnesses.

They were exhibited, not in private, but in the

* Acts ii. 1---12.

† John iii. 2.

most public places; by the way side, in villages, in towns, in cities, at Ephesus, at Jerusalem, at Corinth; not before a few select friends, but in the presence of enemies, as well as friends. Sometimes the spectators were few in number; at other times they were a multitude. Jesus Christ wrought his miracles in Judea and in Galilee. The Jewish capital beheld the displays of his divine power. There too his Apostles first exhibited miracles as the credentials of their heavenly mission; and afterwards in different parts of the Roman empire, and of the world, in which they preached the gospel. The impressions made by the sight of them was great and remarkable. No one disputed their reality.

3. The design of these miracles was most important and worthy of the special interposition of God.

To attest the character and mission of his own Son, and of the Apostles; to confirm his revelation; to set up the kingdom of Christ in the world, and to save the souls of men—this was the great design. A greater and more important design cannot be contemplated.

4. The record of these miracles was published in the very country in which they were exhibited, and while multitudes who had witnessed them were living.

Such is the scriptural representation. Matthew's gospel is supposed to have been written soon after the resurrection of our Redeemer. The other three, and the Acts of the Apostles, were published within thirty-five years from the same event. Many of the epistles were sent forth to the churches much sooner. We have seen what a bold appeal Paul makes to the Corinthians in regard to the miracles he had wrought among them; and how in his epistle to the Romans,

by affirming the miracles that had attended his ministry, in various places, he invited investigation and refutation. The resurrection of our Lord from the dead, forms the basis of the gospel; and every where, and at all times, from the beginning to the end of their ministry, the Apostles announced this fundamental truth: for the gospel could not be preached without its annunciation. The resurrection of Christ constituted the theme of Peter's address to the multitude at Jerusalem, when, on the day of Pentecost, he commenced his public ministry. Standing up with the disciples, he proclaimed his Saviour's resurrection. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and

hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

A bold appeal! indicating the consciousness of truth. What impostor, addressing an audience, would dare to rest his cause on the personal knowledge of his hearers; and appeal to them for the truth of his statement of facts, affirming that they well knew the miracles to which he referred had been witnessed by them? Surely no one could, in the presence of his enemies, utter the language of Peter, but a man who felt assured he was speaking truth, which could not be contradicted.

5. The fifth remark is this: If these miracles were really wrought and believed, the knowledge of them must have been extensively circulated throughout the world.

That the rumour of our Lord’s miracles must have been widely spread through all Judea and Galilee, is too plain to be denied. Such wonderful works could not have been done without becoming the subject of general conversation among their inhabitants. Luke tells us, that king Herod, who had heard of the miracles of Jesus, was glad when Pilate sent him to him, expecting he would work a miracle to gratify his curiosity. The day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was shed down on the Apostles, in so miraculous a manner, was a festival that attracted Jews from all parts of the world; and on that occasion, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every

* Acts ii. 22—36.

nation under heaven ;" of which the sacred historian has given a long list. Now these strangers, congregated in the capital of Judea, who witnessed the wonders of that day with such amazement, would not fail on their return home, to speak of what they had seen and heard with such astonishment to their friends, and thus circulate the knowledge of the miracle very extensively. Besides, the Apostles, wherever they went, wrought miracles, to establish their character as commissioned by Jesus Christ to publish his gospel to all nations.

SECTION II.

RECEPTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS A PROOF OF THE REALITY OF MIRACLES.

Two facts appear on the very face of the New Testament: 1. That the gospel was preached immediately after the resurrection of our Lord ;—2. That the miracles of Jesus and of his Apostles were extensively known in the world. From these facts the inference may be conclusively drawn, that if the gospel had not then been preached, and if the writings of the New Testament had been forged and not published, till after the apostolic period, they could not possibly have gained credit in the world. In that case they would have contradicted all facts; affirming men to be in possession of knowledge which they themselves were sure they did not possess ;—churches to be in existence which had no existence ;—Christians to be found all over the world when none could be found ;—and an order of men set apart to the ministry when no such order was in being. Writings asserting such barefaced falsehoods would have met with universal

reprobation. They could not possibly have gained credit.

But the New Testament writings have gained credit, and are at this day revered as the word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And from this undeniable fact we may, with confidence infer, that they must have been written and received in the period in which they profess to have been written; for in no other period could they have obtained credit. Penned and published for general instruction, it was impossible for them to lie concealed, if Christianity had obtained the success in the world which they affirm. Prized by Christians as containing an accurate record of the facts, doctrines, precepts, and institutions of their religion, copies of them would soon be multiplied, and circulated through all the churches, read and studied by all capable of reading, and especially by the ministry. Books implying all this, could not hope to obtain credit, while they rested their claim to truth, by appealing to the knowledge of readers which they did not possess, and by pretending to a great degree of notoriety, at the very time they were unknown. Success in these circumstances, we repeat it, was impossible. At no period except the apostolic period, the period in which the gospels and the epistles of the New Testament profess to have been written, could they have been received. And that they were then received as genuine, authentic, credible, and divine, follows conclusively from the fact that they are now, and have been for ages, received as possessing such high claims to credit and veneration.

But it may be inquired, On what grounds did primitive Christians receive the sacred Scriptures as the

inspired standard of their faith and practice? One ground evidently was the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles. Our blessed Lord sustained his character, by appealing to the writings of Moses, and to his own miracles. To the Jews he said, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"* On another occasion he appealed to his works, and said to them, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."† Miracles were evidently the Apostles' credentials, to prove their commission from heaven, as God's ambassadors, to negotiate a treaty of reconciliation with rebellious men. They were signs of the apostleship. So we are taught by Paul, who, writing to the Corinthians, says, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, with all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds."

By their miraculous powers the Apostles established their commission to instruct mankind, to bear to them the messages of divine grace, and to declare infallibly the will of God. On the ground of miracles, primitive Christians acknowledged the authority of the Apostles to teach them, and received their writings as infallibly true.

It appears, then, that we have the testimony of primitive Christians to the reality of the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ and his Apostles. But it may be asked, Were they not deceived, and may not we be deceived by receiving their testimony?

In reply to this inquiry, it may be observed, that in

* John v. 46, 47.

† Ib. x. 37, 38.

the nature of the miracles to which they testify,—in the character of primitive Christians, and in the vast importance of the question at issue—we find abundant reasons for the conclusion, that there could be no danger of their being deceived. The miracles were of that kind, as to require only common sense and a sound state of the bodily organs, to decide upon their true character. An illiterate man was as competent a witness of our Saviour's miracles, and of those of his Apostles, as a learned man. When our Redeemer opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, gave feet to the lame, and speech to the dumb, and raised Lazarus from the dead; and when his Apostles performed similar wonders, by uttering a word in his name; learning was not necessary to enable spectators to know whether these were real miracles. To see them was sufficient to convince the witness of the fact that these wonders were effected by a Divine power,

It is true that “not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;” and it is equally true, that among the disciples of our Lord have, in every age, been found, not only men of sound judgment and discriminating mind, but also men of great learning and splendid genius. Convinced by the miracles of our Redeemer, “many of the chief rulers of the Jews, believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”* “A great company of the priests, were obedient to the faith.”† Paul was a man of learning and genius; and, although for some time a bitter persecutor of Christians, from a

* John xii. 42, 43.

† Acts vi. 7.

belief that in shedding their blood, and putting forth all his powers to crush the infant church, he was doing God service, yet he became a convert to that cause which had at first been the object of his deadly hate.

Besides, consider that Christians were hated both by Jews and Gentiles, and that, by professing to be the followers of Christ, believers exposed themselves to great danger and sufferings. In such circumstances, it is evident that none would make a profession of faith in Christ, unless he was fully convinced of the truth of Christianity. Nor can it be doubted that the miracles of the Apostles were subject to a severe scrutiny, and not believed to be real miracles, without the fullest conviction. Many Christians became martyrs to the faith: and their testimony to facts in regard to which they could not be deceived, sealed with their blood, is certainly of the best and surest kind, and worthy of all credit.

In reviewing this extended argument it appears,—
1. That the miracles of our Lord and of his Apostles, were of such a nature that their true character could not be mistaken;—2. That these miracles were really believed by primitive Christians to be true miracles;— and 3. That the proof of this fact is their reception of the sacred Scriptures, which contain a detailed account of them.

Thus we have reached the conclusion at which we aimed, THE REALITY OF THE MIRACLES of Jesus Christ and of his Apostles.

Miracles being admitted, it will follow, that Christ was what he declared himself to be, the SON OF GOD, the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, and the LORD OF GLORY; and that the writings of his Apostles are what they claim to be, THE WORD OF GOD, WRITTEN BY MEN INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

CHAPTER VI.

PROPHETIES.

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SECTION I.

GENESIS iii. 14, 15, EXPLAINED.

It was stated in a previous chapter, that the religion of the Bible is founded on prophecies as well as on miracles, and that by this proof of its Divine origin it is distinguished from all other religions that have ever gained a footing in the world. “The testimony of Jesus,” says John, “is the spirit of prophecy.”* By the fulfilment of clear and unequivocal prophecies recorded in the Bible, he has established his claims to the character and offices which he assumed, as the Son of God, the Saviour of fallen men, the Sovereign of all worlds, and the Judge of quick and dead.

We now enter on the discussion of this singular and convincing proof of the Divine authority and inspiration of the Bible. The plan we have adopted confines us to prophecies that have been fulfilled, and the evidence of which we find in the Bible itself. Were we to exhibit that class of prophecies, the evidence of whose fulfilment is to be found in profane history, the proof of the Divine authority and inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, would be greatly accumulated; but it would require our discussion to be greatly extended. This task is unnecessary; because it has been executed by abler hands.

The first prophecy that falls within our plan, is recorded in Genesis iii. 14, 15. “And the Lord God

* Revelations xix. 10.

said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

It were absurd to interpret this passage as denouncing a punishment confined to the animal, called a serpent. It is indeed stated in this chapter, that "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field;" and that he conversed with and tempted our mother Eve. But, let it be remembered that the serpent was not a rational creature, nor endowed with the faculty of speech, which distinguished man from all inferior creatures in this world. We are, therefore, compelled to look out for a superior being, who used the organs of the serpent in speaking, and in conducting the whole temptation. Aided by the light of holy Scripture, we find no difficulty in detecting the true tempter; who, through his subtlety, deceived Eve, and through her, effected the fall of Adam, and his whole posterity. It was the Devil. Every where in Scripture he is represented as the great tempter of men; and in reference to the temptation of the first woman, our Saviour, speaking of him, says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth; because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it."* In the book of Revelation, John says, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and

* John viii. 44.

Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”* Again, he says, “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”†

By the seed of the serpent are meant, wicked, unbelieving men, who are led captive by him at his pleasure. Addressing the Pharisees and Sadducees, John the Baptist exclaims, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”‡ Speaking of the same class of men, our Lord says, “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?” Again, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”§ But lest it should be supposed that only such notorious sinners are to be regarded as the serpent’s seed, we adduce the sweeping statement of John: “He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.” “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”||

By the seed of the woman is meant pre-eminently the Saviour, who was born in a miraculous manner. He had a virgin for his mother, but no human father. Hence Paul says, “God sent forth his Son, *made of a woman.*”¶ But all renewed and sanctified men may

* Revelation xii. 9

§ Matt. xii. 34; xxiii. 33.

† Ib. xx. 2, 3. See 2 Cor. xi. 3, 14. || 1 John iii. 8, 10.

‡ Matthew iii. 7.

¶ Galatians iv. 4.

be denominated the seed of the woman; for enmity does exist between the serpent's seed, and all true believers. Our Lord teaches this mournful fact, when he says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."*

Bruising the serpent's head, in which lies his poison and power to hurt, signifies the overthrow of Satan, and depriving him of power to accomplish his ruinous designs. And was not all this eminently fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman? "For this purpose," says John, "the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."† Satan assailed him in the wilderness, but he was defeated in all his temptations. "Get thee hence, Satan," was his rebuke; "and he departed from him."‡ "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage."§ "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."|| Thus the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head; and he will do it still more effectually, when, having brought to eternal glory all his redeemed people, he shall say to them on his left hand, at the close of the judgment, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."¶

But, in accomplishing the work of redemption, and

* John xv. 19. † Matthew iv. 10. || Colossians ii. 15.

† 1 John iii. 8. § Hebrews ii. 14, 15. ¶ Matt. xxv. 41.

in destroying the works of the devil the Redeemer humbled himself; submitting to poverty, reproach and persecution, to scourging, condemnation, and crucifixion; and to the various assaults of Satan and his legions, who assailed him, especially in his last hours, with all their malice and fury. Thus was his heel bruised by the serpent; or in other words, he suffered in his human, his inferior nature, in conflict with fallen spirits.

In this manner was this first and grand prediction fulfilled.

SECTION II.

GENESIS XV. 13, 14, EXPLAINED.

The next prophecy to which we shall direct the reader's attention, is found in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a strange land, that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance." How remarkably was this fulfilled! Did not God judge the Egyptians who had enslaved and cruelly treated them? Were they not delivered by severe and desolating judgments on the Egyptian people? Were not Pharaoh and his host, who madly pursued them, all drowned in the Red Sea? Were they not enriched by the gifts which they received from the Egyptians, just before they left the land of servitude, and by the spoils which they gathered on the shore of the Red Sea, after the destruction of their enemies?

The seed of Abraham were strangers in a strange

land four hundred years. Isaac was sixty years old, when Jacob was born. Gen. xxv. 26. Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old, when he entered Egypt. Gen. xlvi. 9. These sums make one hundred and ninety years. Add to this two hundred and fifteen years, during which period the Israelites dwelt, according to the calculations of chronologists, in Egypt; and we have four hundred and five years, only five beyond the four hundred specified in the prophecy, which was delivered in round numbers to the exclusion of the five that exceeded.

An objection, however, may be urged against the fulfilment of the prophecy, by alleging the text, where Moses says, "Now the *sojourning* of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years; even the self same day it came to pass, that the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Exod. xii. 40. This seems to present a difficulty. But it is easily removed, by observing that the two texts do not refer to the same thing. This refers to the sojourning of the children of Israel, which will be presently shown to have been four hundred and thirty years; but the other speaks of the *seed of Abraham* being strangers in a strange land, which was four hundred years.

It may, we are aware, be replied, Are not the children of Israel the seed of Abraham? Strictly taken, they are; but we apprehend that, by the children of Israel in this passage, the *Israelitish people* are to be understood. "The Lord," says Moses, "did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were in number more than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." Deut. vii. 7. When did the Lord set his love upon them, and choose them? He chose

them in Abraham, and set his love upon them, when he said to their illustrious father, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."* Taking this as the date of their sojourning, the time will be exactly, as Moses states it, four hundred and thirty years; for this date preceded the birth of Isaac twenty-five years; (Compare Gen. xii. 4, with Gen. xxi. 5;) which added to the sum four hundred and five, mentioned above, gives the precise amount.

SECTION III.

DIFFCULTIES REMOVED.

This interpretation of the text, given in the preceding section, by which the fathers are included under the denomination, "The children of Israel," is not a forced one. Were a historian to say, This nation have inhabited the land they possess two hundred and twenty-four years, we should be immediately carried in our calculation to the year 1620; when the pilgrim fathers planted their little colony on the rock of Plymouth. In the use of such language there would be no impropriety, although we have not existed as a nation more than sixty-eight years, when Congress declared these United States of America a free and independent people. Before that time we were dependent colonies, subject to the control of the mother country. If then such historical language would necessarily, without involving any abuse of language, embrace, not merely the American people, while ex-

* Genesis xii. 1, 2.

isting as a nation, but their fathers who first settled in this country ; may we not, with strict propriety, interpret the language of Moses, when he says, "now the *sojourning* of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years ;" as referring not merely to the individuals who were literally such, but to their fathers, and their illustrious father Abraham ; who commenced this sojourning, by leaving at the command of God, his native country, his kindred, and his father's house, and dwelling in a strange land ? No force is put upon the language of the Hebrew historian ; nor is he to be censured as using any unusual latitude of terms.

Dr. Clarke, in his commentary on this text, removes the difficulty, by contending that the passage as it exists in the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, is the true original. He translates it thus : "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of *Canaan* and in the *land of Egypt*, was four hundred and thirty years." If this be the true original, then even the appearance of difficulty vanishes. We, however, are satisfied with the text as it stands in our Hebrew Bibles, and believe the interpretation we have given above to be fair and correct.

As a more serious difficulty in the way of our argument from the fulfilment of the prophecy, it may be alleged, that the record of the prophecy by Moses, was posterior to its fulfilment. This we do not deny ; we admit that the event predicted had occurred before he reduced the prophecy to writing. The question then turns on the fidelity of Moses as a historian. He has stated it as a fact that the prophecy was delivered to Abraham. Did he state a truth or a falsehood ? He

had the means of learning the truth. If this prediction was delivered to Abraham, he certainly did not fail to make it known to his son Isaac; and Isaac would do fail to transmit it to Jacob. Nor would Jacob fail to make it known to his children. A tradition so interesting could not but be handed down from generation to generation. "And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." Gen. xlviii. 21. Joseph certainly believed God's promise and prediction on this subject; for he, when dying, assured the children of Israel that God would certainly bring them to the land of Canaan and bring them back again to carry with them his bones. Gen. xlviii. 26. They fulfilled this oath. Exod. xii. 43.

Such are the particulars in relation to this prophecy which Moses has recorded. Were they forgeries? Was Moses an unfeigned historian? Do his writings indicate any trace of the kind? Are not simplicity, candour, fairness, and impartiality stamped on his writings? We have an evidence of his truth in the two passages compared. Had he been an impostor, he would have guarded against the apparent inconsistency between the two. Instead of saying, "The sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years," he would have said, the sojourning of the seed of Abram was four hundred years; and thus have made out the fulfillment of the prediction. This he did not. Contented of speaking the truth, he disdains to anxiety to avoid any apparent inconsistency; and instead of showing the fulfillment of the prophecy, he speaks of the sojourning of the children of Israel from the time of Abram's entering into the land of Canaan; leaving

it to his readers to calculate, from particulars recorded by him, whether the prophecy was fulfilled or not.

Besides, it must be remembered that Moses had, before he wrote his five books, fully established his divine mission by the great and wonderful miracles he wrought, and had been acknowledged by the Hebrew people as their divinely appointed lawgiver, who received from God the laws which he delivered to them, and was inspired by his Spirit in writing his books, and so preserved from all error. See second and third chapters.

SECTION IV.

GENESIS xvii. 5, 6, EXPLAINED.

The third prophecy claiming our attention, is recorded in the 17th chapter of Genesis. There the name of the patriarch was changed from *Abram* to *Abraham*, in correspondence with the promise and prediction contained in these words, (verses 5, 6,) "For a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." When this record was written by Moses, Abraham had already become the father of two nations. But how have the natural descendants of this illustrious patriarch since multiplied! And when we consider the true import of the prediction and of the promise, in what an amazing manner have they been fulfilled! Turn to the exposition which Paul gives (Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16, 17,) of the transaction recorded by Moses in Gen. xvii.; and you will find, that Abraham was constituted the father of all believers, whether found among his natural descendants, or among converted

heathen. A natural and a spiritual seed were promised to Abraham; and the promise has been more eminently fulfilled in regard to the latter than to the former. He is the father of all true believers, not only among the Jews, but among the Gentiles. How has his spiritual seed been multiplied, in the many centuries that have rolled away from his day to the advent of Christ, and from that great event down to the present time! And what multiplied millions will, in successive ages, be added to his spiritual family, from the present time down to the end of the world! So wonderfully have the promise and the prediction been fulfilled. In subsequent ages they will receive a still more amazing fulfilment.

SECTION V.

GENESIS xlix. 8—10, EXPLAINED.

In the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, the expiring patriarch Israel predicted the fortunes of his children. Were we to undertake the task, we might show how remarkably his predictions in regard to each of his twelve sons have been fulfilled. But this would extend our discussion too far; and we are constrained to refer those who feel inclined to examine each prediction to commentators, who have shown how fully and particularly each has been accomplished.* We shall notice only that which relates to Judah. “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion’s

* See “The Prophetic Blessings of Jacob and of Moses respecting the twelve tribes of Israel, explained and illustrated,” a little book published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Verses 8—10.

Here is clearly foretold the pre-eminent dignity of the tribe of Judah; for it is of the tribes, and not of his sons, that the dying patriarch speaks: (see verse 28;) and every person acquainted with the Bible history of the Hebrew people must know that, in various ways, this tribe was signally distinguished above the other tribes. In their encampment the first station was assigned to Judah. (Numbers ii. 2—9.) The prince of this tribe made his offering for the dedicating of the altar, on the *first* day; (Numbers vii. 12;) Judah had the *first* lot in the land of Canaan; (Joshua xv;) and when, after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of the Lord, who should go up for them *first* against the Canaanites to fight against them, He replied, "Judah shall go up: behold I have delivered the land into his hand." (Judges i. 1, 2.) David, that eminent saint and distinguished warrior, who so successfully subdued all the enemies of Israel, and put that people in full possession of the promised land; and Solomon his son, so famed for his wisdom and the splendor of his reign, were both of the tribe of Judah. Their descendants, for centuries, sat upon the throne of Judah, and long after the ten tribes of Israel had been carried away into captivity. Judah too were afterwards sent into captivity, for their sins; but the Lord was pleased to restore them to their own land and permit them to enjoy again their appointed worship, and distinguished religious privileges.

The other part of this prophecy was also eminently fulfilled ; the sceptre did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till *Shiloh*, the *Sent*, the *Messiah*, came. The Jews had been conquered by the Romans, and were subject to their control ; but they were governed by their own laws, and their own rulers, with some restrictions. The sceptre was departing ; but it had not wholly departed.

The prediction of this same patriarch in regard to the two sons of Joseph, was, as scripture history clearly shows, manifestly fulfilled. Manasseh was the elder and Ephraim the younger son. When, therefore, Joseph saw his father place his right hand on the latter, he was displeased and wished his father to place it on the former, as the first-born ; the patriarch “ refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it : he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great ; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.”* The prediction was literally fulfilled : Ephraim became, in his posterity, in their numbers, authority, and influence, far greater than Manasseh.

SECTION VI.

JERICHO.

After the destruction of Jericho, Joshua said, “ Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city of Jericho : he shall lay the foundation in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.”† The exact fulfilment of this prophecy is recorded in 1 Kings xvi. 34. “ In his days” (Ahab’s) “ did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho : he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and

* Genesis xlviii. 17—20.

† Joshua vi. 26.

set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua, the son of Nun."

CHAPTER VII.

PROPHETIES.

SECTION I.

THE WRITER OF THE TWO BOOKS OF KINGS A CREDIBLE WITNESS.

THE two books, styled "The first and the second book of Kings," contain a great number of prophecies, and an account of their fulfilment. But these books were written subsequently to their fulfilment. It will, therefore, be necessary, previously to an examination, of these predictions, to ascertain what reliance is to be placed in the historical truth and accuracy of these books.

It is admitted that the writer lived long after some of the facts which he records. These books embrace a period of four hundred and fifty years, or more. They are attributed by some to Isaiah, by others to Jeremiah, and by others to Ezra. The settlement of the question in regard to authorship is not material. The main question to be settled is, Was the author competent to write a history of the transactions which he records, and is his history credible? If he be a competent and credible witness of facts, we have a sure foundation on which to rest our argument from prophecy, in favour of the Divine authority and inspiration of the Bible. To evince this, let the following remarks be well considered and weighed.

SECTION II.

PROOFS OF HIS CREDIBILITY.

1. Consider the *character of these books*. They are *historical*; written with great plainness, simplicity, and apparent candor and regard to truth. Marks of these appear every where on their pages.

They contain a history, not merely of the political affairs of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, but especially of the divine interposition in these affairs; rewarding his people when obedient, and punishing them when disobedient; and at length, after a long forbearance with them, sending both kingdoms into captivity. No one can read these books without seeing and acknowledging this fact.

2. Consider that these books have been RECEIVED, *both by Jews and Christians, as part of the canon of their inspired writings.*

We may then be sure they have been subject to a severer scrutiny, than was ever applied to any uninspired history; because the highest interests of men were concerned in deciding correctly the question of their authenticity and inspiration. The commentaries of Cæsar, and the History of Tacitus, were never subject to such an ordeal. Yet who doubts their authenticity?

3. Consider the DOCUMENTS *to which the writer of these books appeals.*

He appeals in confirmation of his history first, to the "book of the acts of Solomon;" (1 Kings xi. 41;) secondly to "the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah;" and, thirdly, to "the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel." To the book of the Chronicles

of the kings of Judah, the writer refers *thirteen* times, once at the end of each reign; and in like manner to the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, he refers *nineteen* times. His references are, in all the places, expressed in nearly the same words; either in the form of a question, "Are they not written in the book of the Chronicles—?" or in an affirmative sentence, "They are written in the book of the Chronicles of —."

From the manner in which the writer makes his appeals, it is manifest that these books were then in existence, and that they were received as containing authentic history of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Had not these books been in existence in the writer's time, or had they not been regarded as authentic history, an appeal to them could have afforded no confirmation to his own history, but would have ruined its credit. No man in our day writing history, could be so absurd as to hope to establish his veracity as a writer, by appealing to writings that have no existence, or that possess no historical reputation. Equally absurd would it have been in the author of these books to entertain such a hope, and equally ruinous to his character would his references have been. And the fact that he did obtain credit to his writings, is conclusive proof, that these books to which he appeals were extant in his day, and accredited as containing true history.

4. Consider *the GREAT NUMBER of prophecies, the fulfilment of which is recorded in these books.*

They contain more than *twenty-seven* predictions, covering a period of four hundred and fifty-years. They are found almost in every chapter. With the exception of a very few, they relate to kings: and

were delivered in such circumstances that they could not fail to be known, and to interest the public mind. We have no reason to doubt their record in the historical books to which the writer appeals. If they had not been thus recorded, his reference to these books would have been of no avail to support the credit of his own narrative; and if they were not generally known to have been delivered and fulfilled, the insertion of them in his history could not possibly have gained them credit. The reply to such a writer would have been this: "You tell us of prophecies and of their fulfilment, relating to events of a nature so interesting to the two nations, that if true they must have been recorded and known long before your time; and yet we neither know them, nor can we find any record of them. Shall we, on your simple assertion, believe events to have occurred, affecting most deeply the affairs both of Judah and of Israel, of which we have no remembrance and can find no record? Our fathers have not told them to their children; no one has reduced them to writing. Whence have you derived your knowledge of these marvellous events, which must have produced such great changes in our national affairs?" These predictions and their fulfilment must have been generally known, before this history was written, or it would never have gained credit.

SECTION III.

ILLUSTRATION.

Since the first settlement of our own country, no prophet ever appeared to foretell what great events would occur in our national affairs. Had prophets,

commissioned by heaven, appeared to our fathers, and actually predicted, time after time, the most important events that have come to pass, their predictions would have been recorded, and the exact fulfilment of them would have excited attention, and established their reputation.

Now let us suppose an author should undertake to write a history of the United States, from the time that Europeans first came to settle in this country; that he should interweave a spirit of prophecy with every interesting occurrence in their affairs; that he should, at every important period, introduce a prophet, presenting himself to the chief men, and in a public manner foretelling the events, with their circumstances, just as they have occurred; and that he should show that the different prophets were accredited by the chief men, as prophets sent from heaven, and that they were at different times applied to for a discovery of coming events; would such a writer gain credit? Would not an appeal on his part to existing and authentic histories, in confirmation of his history, be utterly in vain? Would not his writings, so far as relates to predictions, be rejected as altogether fictitious and false?

It is only on the principle, that the predictions recorded in these two books, were true, and literally fulfilled, and that a spirit of prophecy was known and believed to exist, in Judah and Israel, that the reception of these books, by the Jews as part of the canon of their sacred Scriptures, can be accounted for. Admit the existence of a spirit of prophecy, and the truth of the predictions, and then we see abundant reason, why these books were accredited as true and divinely inspired; but deny the truth of the predictions and

the existence of a spirit of prophecy, and then their reception by the Jews cannot be accounted for. It would have been impossible for them to gain credit.

SECTION IV.

PROPHECIES IN THESE BOOKS.

Let us now look at the prophecies recorded in these books.

1. The first relates to Solomon. It is recorded in these words: “Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father’s sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all thy kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake, which I have chosen.”* This prediction was repeated by the prophet Ahijah, who assured Jeroboam that God would take from Solomon’s son ten tribes and set him over them as king, and that Solomon’s son should retain one tribe.†

This prophecy certainly became publicly known; for Solomon sought, on account of it, to kill Jeroboam, and Jeroboam fled into Egypt. Of the fulfilment we have an accurate recital in the following chapter. The event occurred just as it had been foretold. In that chapter we are informed, that, after Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, had assembled an army of one

* 1 Kings xi. 11—13.

† Ib. xi. 27—37.

hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors, out of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with a view of bringing back the ten tribes who had revolted from his government, God interposed by his prophet Shemaiah; who, by Divine direction, forbade Rehoboam and the two tribes to fight with their brethren the children of Israel. They obeyed the heavenly mandate. See verses 21—24.

2. The next is that remarkable prediction recorded in the thirteenth chapter, against the altar which Jeroboam had built in an unlawful manner at Bethel.

The king was standing by the altar to burn incense, when a man of God “cried against the altar in the word of God, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.” Verses 2, 3.

The circumstances attending the enunciation of this prediction, certainly rendered it public and memorable. The king was standing by the altar to burn incense;—offended at the boldness of the prophet in uttering the prophetic denunciation in his presence and hearing, he put forth his hand to seize him;—his impious hand was immediately “dried up, so that he could not pull it again to him;”—the sign of the truth of the prediction came to pass, “the altar was also rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar;”—the king begged the prophet to entreat the Lord that his hand might be restored to soundness;—“the man of God

besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before ;”—the king invited the prophet to go home with him to refresh himself, and promised to give him a reward ;—but the man of God refused to go ; because he had been forbidden by the Lord to eat bread or drink water in that place.

Verses 4—10. Having left it, and going, according to commandment, a different way from that he had travelled in coming to Bethel, he was overtaken on his journey by an old and false prophet, who deceived him, by pretending he was divinely directed to bring him back. He returned to the place, and partook of the refreshment provided ; but on his way homeward he was, for his disobedience, met by a lion and slain.

Verses 11—25.

A prediction thus delivered and accompanied with such circumstances, could not fail to become notorious and matter of record.

In 2 Kings xxiii. 15—20, we have recorded the exact and literal fulfilment of this singular prediction, by Josiah, king of Judah. He broke down this altar, which Jeroboam had made at Bethel, and “ stamped it to powder ;” and “ he took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.” After the lapse of three hundred and fifty years from the date of the prophecy, the man of the house of David, who had been predicted by name, appears, and literally accomplishes it ; and thus establishes the fact that it was uttered by the prophet under divine inspiration.

3. The fourteenth chapter of this book records the prediction of Ahijah the prophet, whom the wife of

king Jeroboam came to consult about his son, who was sick. The prophet said to her, "When thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die." Verse 12. In the 16th verse it is recorded, "And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah; and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died."

The same chapter contains a prediction of the utter destruction of the house of Jeroboam, delivered by the same prophet to his wife; (verses 6—11, 14;) and in the next chapter, speaking of Baasha, who conspired against Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, and smote him, the sacred historian says, "And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all in the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Akijah, the Shilonite." Verses 27—29.

4. The sixteenth chapter contains a prediction of the prophet Jehu, denouncing the utter destruction of the house of Baasha, the king of Israel, like that by another prophet against the house of Jeroboam. Baasha died and his son Elah ascended his throne. He reigned only two years; for Zimri slew him, and destroyed the entire house of Baasha; leaving not one of his family to survive, and extending the work of extermination even to his kinsfolk and friends. See verses 9—13.

5. In the seventeenth chapter we find two predictions of Elijah. The first foretold that for several years there should be no rain: which was fulfilled; for the rain was withheld till the third year, when it pleased God to send rain, (chap. xviii. 1,) in answer to the prophet's prayers; (verses 41—46;) after the

signal miracle which he wrought to convince the people of Israel that Jehovah was the true God. See verses 18—40.

The second prophecy of Elijah was addressed to the poor widow of Zarephath, that “the barrel of meal should not waste,” nor “the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.” Verses 10—15. The prediction came to pass; “The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.” Verse 16. The poor widow had in her house only a handful of meal and a little oil in a cruise. She was gathering sticks, that she might prepare for her and her son the last meal; after partaking of which she expected both would soon die of hunger. But the meal and the oil were so miraculously multiplied, that she, her son, and the prophet did eat many days. Verse 15. The son of this poor woman afterwards fell sick and died; (verse 17;) but the prophet prayed, “and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.” Verses 21—24.

6. In the twentieth chapter we find *five* predictions. The *first* engaged deliverance to the king of Israel from the army of the king of Syria, who was besieging Samaria: “And behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.” Verse 13. The prophecy was fulfilled by two hundred and thirty-two young

men, and a small army of seven thousand men. Verses 14—21.

The *second* foretold the return of the Syrians the next year, and advised the king of Israel to prepare to fight them. Verse 22. They accordingly came. Verse 26. “The children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.” Verse 27.

The *third* promised to Ahab victory over this great army of enemies. “And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not a God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.” Verse 28. Seven days after this prophecy the battle was fought; the Syrians were completely discomfited and routed. The small army of Israel slew of the numerous army of “the Syrians a hundred thousand footmen in one day.” Verse 29.

The *fourth* foretold the destruction of a man by a lion, because he disobeyed the voice of the Lord in refusing to smite the prophet who commanded him to smite him. See the prophecy and its fulfilment in verses 35, 36.

The *fifth* denounced ruin to Ahab and Israel for disobedience. The prophet addressed him in these solemn terms, “Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.” Verse 42. The fulfilment is recorded in subsequent parts of this history.

SECTION II.

AHAB'S FALL AT RAMOTH-GILEAD.

7. In the twenty-first chapter is recorded another prediction against Ahab, and one against his wicked and impious wife. The king of Israel wished to obtain the vineyard of Naboth for a garden of herbs. He offered to give a better vineyard in exchange for it, or to buy it with money. Naboth refused to part with the inheritance of his fathers. Grieved at the disappointment, the foolish king "laid him down upon his bed, and turned his face to the wall, and would eat no bread." Verse 4. Jezebel, his wife, contrived, through religious mockery, and perjured witnessess, to put Naboth to death with the forms of law, as being guilty of blasphemy against God and the king. Informed by his wife of the death of Naboth he willingly followed her advice, and went and took possession of his vineyard. By divine direction, Elijah the Tishbite went down to Naboth's vineyard, and thus addressed the king: "Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Verse 19. See the fulfilment of this prophecy in chap. xxii. 37, 38. "So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according to the word of the Lord which he spake."

The prophet Elijah added a divine denunciation

against Ahab's house: "Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel. And I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Abijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin." Verses 20—22. Ahab humbled himself, and the Lord was pleased to postpone the impending calamities till his son's days. Verses 27—29. The fulfilment of the prophecy is recorded in 2 Kings ix. 24, which narrates the slaughter of Jehoram his son, by Jehu; and in 2 Kings x. 1—11, which informs us of the destruction of seventy sons of Ahab by the order of Jehu. It concludes thus: "So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left none remaining." See also verses 25, 26.

Moreover the prophet Elijah pronounced the doom of Ahab's wife, that wicked and idolatrous woman. "And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." Verse 23. How remarkably was this prediction fulfilled! By order of Jehu she was thrown out of a window of the palace, "and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses: and he trode her under foot." Having gone in, and eaten and drunk, he commanded her body to be buried, because she was a king's daughter. Those who went to execute his orders, "found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands." This being reported to Jehu, "He said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel." 2 Kings ix. 33—36.

8. The twenty-second chapter contains a prophecy of the fall of Ahab at Ramoth-gilead. The king of Israel had persuaded Jehoshaphat king of Judah to go with him to capture that city. He consented. The false prophets flattered the wishes of Ahab, saying with one voice, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for the Lord will deliver it into the king's hand." Verse 12. At the suggestion of Jehoshaphat, Micaiah a true prophet was called. At first he ironically adopted the language of the false prophets. Ahab understood him, and adjured him to deliver a true message from God. Thus adjured, he uttered his solemn message, which he well knew would be unacceptable: "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace." Verse 17. The king was displeased; but the faithful prophet went on with his divine message, to show that the false prophets were deceiving the king, and that he would fall by going against Ramoth-gilead. The king commanded him to be put in prison, saying, "Feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." Verse 27. Hearing the order, the prophet exclaimed, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me." Appealing to the people, as witnesses, he said, "Hearken, O people, every one of you." Verse 28.

To save himself, the king disguised himself, when he went into the battle. The pious king of Judah did not; and it had almost proved fatal to him: for mistaking him for Ahab, the captains of the king of

Syria directed, according to his orders, all their forces against him ; but, perceiving their mistake, they turned away from him to seek the king of Israel. At this juncture, a man among the Syrians drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness. Verses 30—34. Being wounded he was taken out of the host, but “ was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even ; and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.” Further to fulfil the prediction, “ There went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.” Verses 35, 36. How exact the correspondence between the events and the language of the inspired prophet ! How fatal to go in opposition to the warning of Heaven !

9. The first chapter of the second book of Kings records a prophecy of Elijah the Tishbite, and its fulfilment. Ahaziah king of Israel was sick in consequence of a serious fall through a lattice in his upper chamber ; and he sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whether he should recover of his disease. Verse 2. Directed by the angel of God, the prophet went to meet the messengers, and delivered his message for the king, saying, “ Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.” Verse 4. The king sent two captains with fifty men each at two separate times, to apprehend Elijah ; but each company was consumed by fire from heaven. The third captain with his fifty men, begging for his life, was spared ; and Elijah, in obedience to the command of the angel of the Lord, went down from the top of the hill on which he sat, appeared before the king, and repeated

his doom ; saying, “ Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word ? Therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.” Verse 16. The historian adds, “ So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken.” Verse 17.

10. The third chapter of this book contains a wonderful prediction of Elisha the prophet, that received a speedy accomplishment, involving a signal miracle ; one of the most public kind, and one that could not be forgotten by the army that witnessed its fulfilment. The king of Israel, with Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and the king of Edom, invaded Moab, and for want of water was in danger of being destroyed by the Moabites. At the instance of the pious king of Judah, the three kings went to Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was with the army, to consult him. He responded favourably : “ Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain ; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord : he will deliver the Moabites also into your hands. And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat-offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.”

“ And when the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upwards ; and stood in the border. And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water ; and the

Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood: and they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country." Verses 16—24.

11. In the fourth chapter we find the prediction of Elisha, that the woman of Shunem, by whom he had been so kindly and hospitably entertained, should conceive and bring forth a son. She accordingly, at the set time, received this blessing. Verses 16, 17. But when the child had grown, he fell sick and died; and this extraordinary prophet, who had received a double portion of the spirit of his master Elijah, raised him from the dead, and presented him alive to his joyful mother. Verses 18—37.

12. The fifth chapter records this prophet's prediction, by which the covetousness of his servant, in receiving a reward from Naaman, the Syrian general, whom his master had healed of a loathsome disease, and from whom he had refused to accept of any recompence, was punished. "And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out of his presence a leper as white as snow." Verses 25—27.

13. The sixth chapter furnishes striking evidence of the prophet's prescience. He saved the king of Israel from danger several times, by showing him in what places he would be exposed to the attacks of the Syrians, if he passed through them. So well known was the prophet's character, that one of the servants of the king of Syria said of him to his master, "Elisha the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber." Verses 8—12. The chapter informs us too, how, at the prophet's prayer, the people, who came with horses and chariots from the Syrian king, to seize him, were smitten with blindness, and then led by the prophet into Samaria, and delivered into the hands of the king of Israel. Verses 13—23.

14. The seventh chapter records a wonderful prediction of this great prophet. Samaria, being besieged by the king of Syria, was reduced to so severe a famine, that "an ass's head was sold for four score pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver;" and human flesh was eaten. See chap. vi. 25—29. In these circumstances, the prophet "Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord, To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord, on whose hand the king leaned, answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." Verses 1, 2. The next day this prophecy was literally fulfilled. Barley and fine flour sold at the specified prices; and the unbelieving nobleman saw the abundance of provisions, but

did not eat of it; “for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.” See the fulfilment, and how it came to pass. Verses 3—20.

15. The eighth chapter contains four predictions of Elisha.—*First*, he foretells a famine of seven years’ duration, and admonishes the woman, whose son he had raised to life, to sojourn wherever she could find support for herself and household. She did so; and at the end of seven years returned, and applied to the king of Israel to be put into possession of her house and land. At the time of her application, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, was telling the king, at his request, the great things his master had done; and recognising her, he said, “My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.” The woman on being addressed by the king, confirmed the fact. Verses 1—6.

Secondly, The prophet foretells the death of Benhadad, king of Syria, although the prophet said he might recover of his disease. So it came to pass; for Hazael suffocated him, by spreading over his face a thick cloth dipped in water. Verses 10—15.

Thirdly, Elisha predicts that Hazael should become king of Syria. Verses 13—15.

Fourthly, He foretells the great calamities he would bring upon the children of Israel; Verses 11—13. See the fulfilment in chap. xiii. 3, 22.

16. In the ninth chapter Elisha predicted that Jehu would be king over Israel. Verses 1—3. See the accomplishment throughout the chapter.

17. In the tenth chapter it is foretold that Jehu’s children to the fourth generation, should sit on the throne of Israel. “And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which

is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." Verse 30. His four successors are named in the subsequent history; and, then, at the end of the reign of Zachariah the fourth in the line, whose throne was usurped by Shallum, who slew him, it is written, (chap. xv. 12,) "This was the word of the Lord which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass."

18. The thirteenth chapter records the predictions, which Elisha uttered, when the king of Israel came to visit him on his sick and dying bed. He foretold he would smite the Syrians *three times*, (v. 19:) and verse 25 has the fulfilment. "Three times did Joash beat him, (Benhadad,) and recovered the cities of Israel." The twenty-first verse of this chapter records a remarkable miracle; for a dead man was raised to life, as soon as he touched the bones of Elisha.

19. The seventeenth chapter contains a summary of the great sins of Israel, committed against the repeated warnings of successive prophets, calling them to repentance. Their persevering obstinacy provoked the Lord to remove Israel out of his sight, and send them into captivity, as he had so often threatened, by many prophets, to do: Moses, seven hundred and thirty years before, had recorded for their warning this alarming prophecy: "When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to

provoke him to anger : I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it ; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you."* This prophecy, delivered seven hundred and thirty years before the event it predicted, was literally fulfilled. The ten tribes existed as a separate nation only two hundred and fifty years ; and were then, on account of their obstinate attachment to dumb idols, carried away by the Assyrian king into captivity, in which they remain to this day.

20. In the nineteenth chapter, we find a remarkable prophecy of Isaiah. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had, as we are informed in the preceding chapter, invaded Judea and captured many fenced cities. Hezekiah in vain attempted, by a large present of silver and gold, to induce the king of Assyria to depart. He sent three of his generals with a large host to Jerusalem, to deride the pious king of Judah, and to urge him to surrender himself and people at discretion ; telling him it was useless to trust in the Lord for deliverance, as none of the gods of the nations had been able to deliver their worshippers out of the hands of the great Assyrian kings. Hezekiah humbled himself before God, and sent his servants to Isaiah the prophet, expressing his hope that God would graciously interpose, and urging him to pray earnestly for the remnant of his people. Verses 1—5. The prophet returned this encouraging answer :— " Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the

* Deuteronomy iv. 25—27.

Lord—Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land ; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.” Verses 6—7. Rabshakeh returned to his master, and found him warring against Libnah. Verse 8. While there the haughty monarch heard that the king of Ethiopia had come to fight him. Verse 9. Thus the prophecy began to be fulfilled ; he “heard a rumour.” Intending to return with a view to meet his approaching enemy, he sent to Hezekiah an insulting and blasphemous letter. The pious king having received it, “went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord,” and poured out his soul in fervent prayer to God, acknowledging the triumph of the kings of Assyria over the idols of the nations, but intreating the Almighty to show his power in delivering his people ; “That all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.” Verses 14—19. His prayer was heard. Isaiah delivered his message from the Lord. Zion might despise the haughty monarch and laugh him to scorn, being confident of Jehovah’s protection. Sennacherib had vainly boasted of his powerful army and his past victories ; but he had forgotten that he was only an instrument in the hands of the Almighty, to accomplish his pleasure. Verses 20—27. To teach him his dependence and feebleness, and to punish his blasphemy, God said, “I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.” Verse 28. “Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come

into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." Verses 32—34.

Such was the prediction. We have seen its incipient accomplishment. The king had heard a rumour of his empire being invaded. Now comes the destructive blast, the entire fulfilment of the prophecy. It is thus recorded: "and it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they rose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh, and it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia." Verses 35—37.

21. The twentieth chapter records—1. Isaiah's prediction of Hezekiah's recovery from a mortal disease, and the addition of fifteen years to his life; and the safety of his city against the designs of the Assyrian king;—2. The miraculous sign that the prediction would be fulfilled, the retrocession of the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz *ten degrees*;—and 3. His prediction that all the treasures in Hezekiah's possession should be carried away into Babylon, after his decease, and that his children should be made eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Of the fulfilment of these prophecies, the Bible has given a particular account.

22. The twenty-first chapter contains the predic-

tion of the ruin of Jerusalem, and the Babylonish captivity. It was delivered by various prophets Verses 10—16. It uttered an awful warning. The calamity was threatened on account of the sins of the people, and especially the heinous sins of Manasseh, by which a holy God was so greatly provoked as to give his heritage to reproach. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Jacob; Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth thereof, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hands of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies.” Josiah, the grandson of the wicked Manasseh, who succeeded his father Amon on the throne of Judah, became, we are informed in the next chapter, (xxii.) so alarmed by the reading of the law, which denounced such heavy judgments on account of the sins of Israel, that he rent his clothes, and sent confidential messengers to the prophetess Huldah, to inquire of the Lord concerning these impending judgments. They brought back an answer in some degree consolatory. God assured Josiah, that the terrible judgments would be executed, but that, in consideration of his penitent humiliation, in view of his threatened indignation, he should not be involved in them. “Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.” Verse 20.

But the hour of vengeance came. The appointed executioner of divine wrath received his commission to do what God had determined to be done, to punish a wicked, rebellious, and ungrateful people. The great Nebuchadnezzar appeared as the scourge of the Almighty. In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters, the sacred historian tells how he besieged and became master of Jerusalem; how he rifled "the treasures of the Lord's house, and of the king's house;" how "he cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord;" how he carried away into captivity "all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, and all the craftsmen and smiths;" and finally, how "he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house."

SECTION V.

REVIEW.

A review of the prophecies contained in the two books of Kings, establishes two facts.

1. *That a spirit of prophecy pervaded the whole period comprised in the history contained in these books.*

Eight prophets and one prophetess are named, besides several others not named, but styled each a man of God. These books record more than *thirty* predictions delivered by these prophets, and narrate their accomplishment; all, with scarce an exception, being of a public nature, and interesting more or less to the whole community.

*2. That the existence of a prophetic spirit was
PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED by the Israelites.*

None doubted its reality. Kings regarded the prophets as foreseeing future events, and inspired to reveal them. Jeroboam the first king of Israel, directed his wife to disguise herself, and apply to the prophet Ahijah, that they might know the issue of their son's sickness. Elijah, after his signal victory over the prophets of Baal, and the signal miracle which he wrought to convince both the king and his people, that Jehovah was the true God, gained such influence over Ahab, the wicked king, that he suffered him to put to death the four hundred false prophets of Baal. 1 Kings xviii. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, having no confidence in the false prophets who were deceiving Ahab, urged him to look out for another; when Micaiah was, by order of the king of Israel, brought forward; who, we have seen, foretold his fall at Ramoth-gilead. On another occasion, Jehoram, his son and successor, at the suggestion of Jehoshaphat, consulted Elisha in relation to the dangerous condition of their armies when going to war with Moab. Hezekiah, when threatened by the Assyrian king, had recourse to Isaiah to learn Jehovah's will; and his grandson Josiah, when alarmed by the threatenings in the books of Moses, sent a message to the prophetess Huldah, that he might know what would come to pass.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH.

THE prophecies of Jeremiah are numerous. We select a few, that relate—1. To the capture and burning of Jerusalem;—2. To the restoration of the Jews;—3. To the capture of Babylon.

SECTION I.

CAPTURE AND BURNING OF JERUSALEM.

These may be ranged under the following particulars.

1. Jeremiah prophesies that “out of the north an evil should break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land;” and that Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah should be assailed by a powerful army. Chap. i. 13—16. Chaldea was to the north of Jerusalem. In chap. v. 7—18, the wickedness of the people is assigned as the cause of the impending evil; and the prophet assures them it would certainly come.

2. Nebuchadnezzar having led his army to Jerusalem, king Zedekiah sent messengers to consult Jeremiah. The prophet declares in the name of the Lord that their opposition would be in vain; that the city would be captured, that the people would suffer from famine, and pestilence, and sword; and that the remainder together with the king, would be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon: but he gave

assurance that those who left the city and went to the Chaldeans, would preserve their lives. Chap. xxi. 1—11.

3. In chap. xxvii. 12—15, the prophet exhorted Zedekiah to submit to “the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people;” that he and his people might live, and escape the evils that would come upon them, if, contrary to the Divine will, they should contend with that mighty monarch, whom God had commissioned to punish them and other nations.

4. Zedekiah had imprisoned Jeremiah for his fidelity in declaring the alarming messages he had received from the Lord; but, unintimidated by persecution, the prophet, in chap. xxxii. 27—36, reaffirms his predictions, and adds that the city would be burnt by the Chaldeans.

5. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, marched his army to assail the Chaldeans, who were besieging Jerusalem, which induced Nebuchadnezzar to break up the siege, and go to meet his enemy. High and confident hopes were entertained by Zedekiah and his people, that they would not return. But Jeremiah is directed to tell them that their hopes were fallacious, that the king of Egypt would afford them no effectual succour, and that the Chaldeans would certainly return to the siege, take the city, and “burn it with fire.” Chap. xxxvii. 7—10.

6. Zedekiah again consults Jeremiah, who delivers this prophecy: “If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon’s princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burnt with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon’s princes, then shall this city be given into the hands of the Chaldeans,

and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hands." Chap. xxxviii. 17, 18.

7. All this was fulfilled. The city was taken; Zedekiah fled by night out of the city; he was pursued by the Chaldeans, and overtaken in the plains of Jericho; judgment was passed upon him by Nebuchadnezzar; his sons were slain before his eyes; his own eyes were put out; and, being bound in chains, he was carried to Babylon. "The Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem." Chap. xxxix. 1—8. The people too were carried to Babylon. Verse 9. See also 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9.

Thus were the predictions of Jeremiah literally fulfilled.

SECTION II.

RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

1. The certain return of the captive Jews is foretold in chap. xxiv. 4—7.

2. In a letter which Jeremiah sent to the captive Jews in Babylon, he exhorts them to build houses to plant gardens, to contract marriages, that they might increase and not be diminished, and to seek the peace of the city in which they were dwelling. Chap. xxix. 1—7.

3. In the same letter the prophet foretells the duration of their captivity, that it should last *seventy years*; and then reassures them that they should be restored to their own land. Chap. xxix. 10—14. Again, in chap. xxxii. 42—44, it is written, "Thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all

the good that I have promised them. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord." All this was fulfilled. See Ezra and Nehemiah, and the fourth section.

SECTION III.

CAPTURE OF BABYLON.

1. This was most distinctly foretold. "The word that the Lord spake against Babylon, and the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and set up a standard: publish and conceal it not; say, Babylon is taken, Merodach is broken in pieces, her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart both man and beast."* Again, "For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the Lord."†

2. The manner of its capture was foretold.

* Jeremiah 1. 1—3.

† Ib. 1. 9, 10.

"One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted."*

That Babylon was taken by Cyrus, who led his army, composed of many nations, from the north, is well known; and equally well known is the fact, that he took it by surprise, by diverting the course of the Euphrates, which ran through the city, thus laying the channel of the river bare; by which means he was enabled to lead his army from both ends of the city, between the walls on both banks; and finding the gates left open, he entered into the heart of the city, and soon became master of it. How exactly this corresponded with the prediction that "one post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end!" The city being captured at the extreme parts, the message from each part would be the same, the "city is taken at one end."

SECTION IV.

FULFILMENT OF THE PREDICTION ABOUT THE JEWS' RESTORATION.

That the Jews did return from Babylon to their own land is universally known. At the close of the second book of Chronicles is this record: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing,

* Jeremiah li. 31, 32.

saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of Heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people, let him go up.”*

But what renders this proclamation the more memorable is, the fact, that Isaiah had foretold, more than one hundred and seventy years before the event, that Cyrus should act thus, and actually called him by *name*; “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;” meaning the inner gates of Babylon.†

SECTION V.

REVIEW.

A review of the prophecies of Jeremiah will conclusively establish the two following facts.

1. *No human foresight did, or could frame them.*

He began by predicting that nations from the north would invade Judah, bring great evil on the land, and besiege Jerusalem. Next when Nebuchadnezzar had come against that city, he foretold that he would take it and burn it, and that the king would not escape.—Then, after the siege had been raised by the Chaldeans,

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 33. Isaiah xlivi. 28.

† Ib. xlvi. 1.

to meet the king of Egypt, he predicted their certain return, and the certain capture and ruin of the city. He foretold also, that the captivity would last *seventy* years; that Babylon, that impregnable city, would be conquered, and that the Jews would certainly be restored to their own land. These things were beyond the reach of any human foresight, and could be foreknown and revealed only by the omniscient Jehovah.

2. *Nothing but an imperious and pressing sense of duty induced Jeremiah to utter these predictions.*

He well knew that they were in direct opposition to the predictions of the false prophets, who flattered the pride and strengthened the false hopes of the king and his nobles. He suffered much for his fidelity. So exasperated were the people against him, that it is recorded, "all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord;" and "the priests and the prophets" said "to the princes, and to all the people, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears."* The king imprisoned him on account of his predictions;† and when he had released him, he was arrested and falsely accused of deserting to the enemy, and punished by the princes, and thrown into a dungeon.‡ The king, however, removed him from the dungeon to the court of the prison, and gave him a daily supply of bread; until the princes besought him that he might be put to death; and the royal assent being granted, that they might do as they pleased, he was thrown into the dungeon in which was no water, but mire. He sank in the mire, and would have perished, had not a compassionate and pious eunuch

* Isaiah xxvi. 9—11.

† Ib. xxxii. 2, 3.

‡ Ib. xxxvii. 11—16; xxxviii. 4—6.

entreathed the king to save the life of the prophet. Being directed by the king to take with him thirty men, he drew the prophet out of the horrible dungeon.*

How overwhelming the sense of duty that constrained the prophet in such circumstances, to utter, and persist in uttering, his most unwelcome messages! How strongly he expresses his feelings! "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me."†

Jeremiah found no pleasure in denouncing the ruin of his country. He was a true patriot. With what beauty and pathos does he, in his *Lamentations*, bewail the calamities of his country and the desolations of her sanctuary! And with what force of language does he set forth his own grief in view of the miseries of his countrymen! "Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people: because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets in the city."‡

* Isaiah xxxviii. 7—12. † Ib. xv. 10. ‡ Lamentations ii. 11.

CHAPTER IX.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING CHRIST, AND THEIR FULFILMENT.

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SECTION I.

SUNDRY PARTICULARS.

THE prophecies relating to Christ recorded in the sacred Scriptures, are very numerous. We shall select a few as a specimen. His descent,—the time of his coming,—the circumstances of his birth,—his miracles, his life,—his sufferings,—his death,—the manner and circumstances of it,—his burial,—his offices,—his resurrection,—his ascension,—his gifts ;—were all foretold, ages before the events occurred.

1. *His descent.* Christ was to be of the seed of Abraham.* He was to be of the tribe of Judah.† He was to be of the family of David.‡ Now, all these predictions were manifestly fulfilled in Christ. See his genealogy. Matt. i. That the Pharisees knew this was to be the descent of their Messiah, is evident; for when our Lord proposed this question, “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?” they promptly replied, “The son of David.”§

2. *The time of his coming.* The patriarch Jacob prophesied that He would appear before the government of Judah was entirely overthrown.|| When

* Genesis xii. 3; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.

§ Matthew xxii. 42.

† Ib. xl ix. 10. Micah v. 2.

|| Genesis xl ix. 10.

‡ Isaiah xi. 1. Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6.

Christ came the sceptre was departing, but still the Jews were governed in some measure by their own laws.* Seventy years after his death their entire state and nation were overthrown; and, for ages past, the tribes have been so confounded, that no Jew can tell from which he is descended.

Daniel prophesied that seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years were appointed for the purposes specified in his prediction. He marks the date; from which calculations are made, that prove that Jesus Christ is he of whom the prophet spake.†

Haggai says, “The desire of all nations shall come.” “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.”‡ So small was the second temple when first built, that the ancient men who had seen the first house “wept with a loud voice,” when they saw the foundation laid.§ This inferior house was afterwards greatly enlarged and beautified by Herod; but still it was much inferior to the house built for God by Solomon. Jesus Christ appeared while the second temple was standing; and, by his presence, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, imparted to it a greater glory than that by which the first was adorned.

3. The circumstances of his birth.

The place of his birth was designated in prophecy. “But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlast-

* Luke ii. 1—8.

† Daniel ix. 24—27.

‡ Haggai ii. 6—9.

§ Ezra iii. 12.

ing.”* When Herod the king demanded of the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born, they readily replied, “In Bethlehem,” and referred as proof of their opinion, to the passage quoted from Micah. The fulfilment of this prediction was very remarkable. Had he been born in the place where his mother lived, Nazareth would have been the honoured place. But that the divine prediction may be fulfilled, the world is set in motion; a decree goes forth from the Roman emperor that all the world shall be taxed. This order rendered it necessary for Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem. While they were there, she brought forth her son.† How sure the words of God!

Isaiah foretold that Messiah would be born, when the family of David was depressed, and deprived of their former prosperity: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.”‡ He was to resemble a shoot springing out of a tree that had been cut down. Such he was; for his mother and his reputed father were so poor, that, when at Bethlehem, they could not command a place in the inn. Although she was in a situation so delicate, they were compelled to retire to a stable; and there was the Saviour, the Lord of glory, born. He was “wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.”§

4. *His life.* Isaiah prophesied, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,”|| &c. How emi-

* Micah v. 2.

† Isaiah xi. 1.

|| Isaiah lxi. 1—3.

‡ Matthew ii. 1—6. § Luke ii. 7.

nently was this prediction fulfilled ! “And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.”* Returning from the wilderness where he had fasted forty days, and had been tempted by the devil, “he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up: and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.” The book of the prophet Isaiah was delivered unto him. He opened it, and read the passage just recited. “He closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth.”†

The same prophet foretold the miracles our Redeemer would perform. Speaking of him, he says, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.”‡ John sent two of his disciples to Jesus to inquire, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”§

The same prophet predicted the humility, meekness, and compassion of the Redeemer. Of him he speaks when he says, “He shall not cry, nor lift up,

* Matthew iii. 16.

† Luke iv. 16—22.

‡ Isaiah xxxv. 4—6.

§ Matthew xi. 2—5.

nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."* The gospels bear ample testimony to the humility, the meekness, and the compassion of Christ.

While prophecy thus characterized the Messiah, it spake of his zeal for God: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."† See the fulfilment in John: "Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and he found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and he said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house, an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."‡

Prophecy says, "He was despised and rejected of men, and we esteemed him not."§ The *gospel history* says, He was despised and rejected by the Jewish scribes, and pharisees, and people. "He came to his own, and his own received him not."||

Prophecy says, "I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."¶ The *gospel history* says, "Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." "But when the pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." **

* Isaiah xlii. 1—4.

† John ii. 13—17.

|| John i. 11.

‡ Psalm lxix. 9.

§ Isaiah liii. 3.

¶ Psalm xxii. 6.

** Matthew xi. 19; xiii. 24.

Prophecy says, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.”* The *gospel history* says, “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do what thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”†

Prophecy says, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”‡ The *gospel history*, in showing its fulfilment, points to the poverty of the Redeemer’s life, to the garden of Gethsemane, to the palace of the High-priest, to the hall of Pilate, and to the hill of Calvary.

Prophecy says, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.”§ The *gospel history* says, “And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.”||

5. *His death, its manner and attending circumstances.* Daniel predicted, “And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.” It is recorded by Matthew, “Jesus, when he had cried with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.”¶

* Psalms ii. 2.

§ Isaiah liii. 7.

† Acts iv. 27, 28.

|| Matt. xxxii. 12—14.

‡ Isaiah liii. 5.

¶ Daniel ix. 28. Matt. xxvii. 50.

Prophecy said, "They pierced my hands and my feet." "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." "He was numbered with the transgressors." The *gospel history* says, "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors with him, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side."*

Prophecy says, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." "They part my garments among them, and cast lots on my vesture." "They gave me also gall for my meat: and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."† The *gospel history* says, "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. Likewise the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."‡

* Isa. liii. 12. Zech. xii. 10. Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 34.

† Psalm xxii. 7, 8, 18, lxix. 21. ‡ Matt. xxvii. 34, 35, 39—43.

6. His burial. Isaiah predicted, “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.” Matthew records the fulfilment: “When even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple; he went boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in a rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.”*

7. His offices. Moses predicted, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.” John and Luke record the accomplishment: “Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “And they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us, and, That God hath visited his people.”†

David predicted, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;” and Zechariah, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

Matthew records the fulfilment: “And all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting

* Isaiah liii. 9. Matt. xxvii. 57—60.

† Deut. xviii. 15. John i. 45. Luke vii. 16.

upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.”*

Peter said on the day of Pentecost, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ.”†

The language of prophecy by David is, “The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec;” and by Zechariah, “Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH—he shall be a priest upon his throne.” Paul records the accomplishment. “Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedec.” “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”‡

8. *His resurrection.* The language of *prophecy* is: “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” The language of *history*: “And the angel answered and

* Psalms n. 6. Zech. ix. 9. Matt. xxi. 5, 9.

† Acts ii. 32—36.

‡ Psalms cx. 4. Zech. vi. 12, 13. Heb. vi. 20. vii. 26.

said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead : and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him : lo, I have told you.”*

9. *His ascension into heaven.* The language of prophecy: “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive : thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” The language of fulfilment: “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” “And he gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”†

SECTION II.

REMARKS.

Here let the reader pause, and review these prophecies. By a careful inspection of them he will find the following points clearly established :

1. *Their great ANTIQUITY.*

The predictions quoted were uttered and recorded long before the Saviour was born. Zechariah, the latest prophet referred to, lived more than five hundred years before the advent of Jesus Christ. Haggai lived about the same time ; Daniel, earlier ; Isaiah

* Psalm xvi. 10. Matt. xxviii. 5—7.

† Psalm lxviii. 18. Acts i. 9. Ephesians iv. 11, 12.

and Micah, nearly seven hundred ; David, more than a thousand ; and Moses, more than fourteen hundred years, before the event predicted.

2. *These prophecies all relate to ONE AND THE SAME PERSON.*

The great *prophet*, and the *seed of Abraham*, in whom all nations were to be blest, of whom Moses spake ;—*Shiloh*, of whose coming Jacob foretold ;—the *Ruler*, whose birth was to adorn Bethlehem Ephratah, of whom Micah prophesied ;—*Messiah*, whose death Daniel predicted ;—*The DESIRE of all nations*, who Haggai foretold would come to his temple ;—*the rod out of the stem of Jesse*, spoken of by Isaiah ;—the *ANOINTED ONE*, and *He by whom such miracles* were to be wrought, and the *SERVANT OF GOD*, whose humility, meekness, and compassion, were foretold by the same prophet ;—*He*, whose sufferings, death, and burial, were predicted, both by David and Isaiah ;—*the PROPHET, the PRIEST, and KING*, of whom Moses, David and Zechariah spake, in the spirit of prophecy :—were all ONE and the SAME PERSON, the MESSIAH ; for in him all were fulfilled.

These predictions guided the expectations of the Jews, and led them to look for the coming of the Messiah, at the time when Jesus Christ was born.

3. *These prophecies constitute a long and numerous series, spreading through many centuries.*

They relate to the *descent* of Messiah,—the *time* of his coming,—the *circumstances* of his birth,—his *miracles*,—his *life*,—and *various particulars* of it,—his *sufferings*,—his *death*,—the *manner* and *circumstances* attending it,—his *burial*,—his *offices*,—his *resurrection*,—his *ascension*,—and his *gifts*. We have quoted twenty-seven, and might have increased the

number. They were delivered by eight different prophets, who lived centuries from each other.

4. *Such a series of prophecies concerning contingent events, that were to occur hundreds of years after the death of the prophets, was unquestionably beyond the reach of human foresight.*

It was utterly impossible for the human mind in one man to frame such a prophetic scheme of future events; and much more impossible for different men, living in a succession of many ages, to combine to frame it. None but the *Eternal*, who lives through all ages, the *omniscient* Jehovah, who sees through all time, past, present, and to come; could inspire the prophets to utter, and record these marvellous predictions.

5. *All these prophecies have been manifestly fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.*

He is the seed of Abraham; he belonged to the tribe of Judah; and he was of the family of David. He was born at the time predicted by Daniel, and when the family of David was greatly reduced. His life, and death, and burial, all corresponded with the prophecies. He was the Messiah, who Daniel said would be cut off; the anointed one of whom Isaiah spake, and who was to perform such great miracles. He is the *Shiloh* of Jacob, to whom was to be the gathering of the people; “the PROPHET of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write;” the PRIEST upon his *throne*, according to Zechariah; the PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEC, according to David; the KING whom God has set in Zion. He is the DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS, who Haggai prophesied would suddenly come to his temple. All the predictions have been fulfilled in him.

SECTION III.

THE TESTIMONY AND PROOF, THAT ALL THESE PROPHECIES
WERE FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST, ARE AMPLE.

The descent of Jesus Christ from Abraham, in the tribe of Judah, through the family of David, two Evangelists prove, by appealing to the public registers of the nation, that had been kept with the greatest care. That he came before the expiration of Daniel's seventy weeks, and that he appeared in the second temple, will not be denied. His humble birth, as recorded in the gospels, is readily admitted. His life, his sufferings, his crucifixion, his death, and his burial, are proved, not only by the Evangelists, four independent witnesses, but by the Apostles, who were eye-witnesses of these important facts. They were certainly competent and credible witnesses. Men of sound minds, they could not be deceived or mistaken in these plain matters; and that they were fully convinced of the facts to which they testified, and did not intend, nor wish, to deceive any by their preaching, is manifest from the labours to which they submitted, and the sufferings they endured through life, and by sealing their testimony with their blood.

The miracles too wrought by our Redeemer are recorded by the four Evangelists; and they were published by the twelve apostles, wherever they went, and confirmed by the miracles which they themselves were enabled to work in his name. Their testimony, as eye-witnesses of our Saviour's miracles, delivered in the most solemn manner, and persisted in, notwithstanding the threats of Jewish priests and rulers, and the persecutions of the heathen nations, ought to be

received and relied upon by every candid inquiring mind. But for convincing arguments on the truth of the miracles both of Christ and his apostles, the reader is referred to the second section of the second and third chapters.

CHAPTER X.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THE GREAT MIRACLE.

ON this greatest of all the miracles recorded by the Evangelists and testified to by his Apostles, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we wish here to dilate.

The importance of this fact is easily seen. It lies at the foundation of the Christian religion. If Jesus Christ really rose from the dead, his religion is true, and all who believe in him will be saved; but if he be not raised, then is our faith vain; we are yet in our sins.

The Redeemer himself attached great importance to this all interesting fact. He foretold his own resurrection. "From that time forth," says Matthew,* "began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Again the same writer says,† "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son

* Matthew xvi. 21.

† Ib. xx. 17—19.

of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death; and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again." "Therefore doth my Father love me," says our Lord, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."* The Jews demanded a sign from Jesus, saying, "What sign shovest thou unto us, seeing thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again." "He spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."† "I adjure thee," said the high priest, "by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."‡

Thus Jesus taught his disciples to look for his resurrection; and on his resurrection he rested his claims to the character of Messiah, the Son of God.

Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead? Important question! His resurrection was the counterpart of his life. If he who wrought such miracles while living; who exercised a control over all the elements of nature; who performed his miracles, not as the prophets, but as God, in his own name, saying, "I

* John x. 17, 18. † Ib. ii. 19—22. ‡ Matthew xxvi. 62, 63.

will ; be thou clean ;" if he had not risen from the dead, it would have been wonderful indeed.

" And behold, there was a great earthquake : for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow : and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."* This was the prelude to our Lord's resurrection. It harmonized with the occurrences at his death, when all nature sympathized with the sufferer : " From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour,"† a preternatural darkness ; the sun ashamed at the atrocious crime committed by wicked men, hid his face, and refused to behold the awful scene. " And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom ; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent ; and the graves were opened ; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection ; and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."‡ This may be considered as an introductory proof.

SECTION I.

ARGUMENT FROM HIS APPEARANCES.

In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear

* Matthew xxviii. 2—4. † Ib. xxvii. 45. ‡ Ib. xxvii. 45, 51—55.

not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you."* This is the first proof.

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."† "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."‡ This is the second proof.

"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came

* Matthew xxviii. 1—7. † John xx. 11—17. ‡ Mark xvi. 9.

and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."* This is the third proof.

Additional proofs of our Lord's resurrection, are recorded for the confirmation of our faith. He appeared to Simon Peter; then to two disciples going to Emmaus, to whom, after conversing with them as they walked along, without knowing him, he revealed himself, when "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them," and then "vanished out of their sight."† In the evening of that day the eleven being assembled together, and hearing the story of the two disciples, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit, and he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and

* Matthew xxviii. 9, 10.

† Luke xxiv. 3, 13—33.

thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and then to rise from the dead the third day."*

Here are three different appearances:—1. To Peter; 2. To the two disciples; 3. To the eleven.

"But," says John, "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

"And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he unto Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."†

Here is another distinct appearance to the disciples. Of another we have an account in the next chapter. Peter, and six other disciples went a fishing. Verse 42. "That night they caught nothing. But when morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast it therefore; and now they were not able to draw it for the abundance of fishes. Therefore

* Luke xxiv. 33—46.

† John xx. 24—29.

the disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship ; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits;) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty-three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise."

"This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead."*

In the preceding chapter, (verses 30, 31.) this Evangelist records this fact: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Thus Jesus Christ proved to his disciples the truth of his resurrection :

1. By the earthquake, the descent of an angel from heaven, who rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and terrified the Roman soldiers, by the splendour of his appearance; and by the different

* John xxi. 1—14.

visions of angels to the women, who assured them that their Lord was indeed risen from the dead.

2. By the various appearances he made of himself to his disciples, attended with various acts to satisfy them that he was truly alive from the dead:—1. To Mary Magdalene,—2. To the women,—3. To Peter, 4. To two disciples,—5. To the assembled apostles and the two disciples, in the absence of Thomas,—6. To the assembled apostles, when Thomas was present,—7. To Peter, and six other disciples, who were fishing in the sea of Tiberias. Paul adds, that Christ “was seen by above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep.”*

All this accumulated evidence was surely sufficient to convince his disciples that he was really alive from the dead. They knew him, and could not be deceived. That the apostles and others were fully convinced of the great fact, that their Master had risen from the dead, they gave undoubted proof in their future conduct. All this, and additional evidence was in due time spread before the Jewish people, by conversation, by the preaching of the apostles, and by the gospels. Previously to the publication of either gospel, or the apostles’ preaching, evidence of the most public kind was given at Jerusalem.

SECTION II.

ARGUMENT FROM THE WONDERS WROUGHT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Jesus Christ had repeatedly promised to his apostles the gift of the Holy Ghost. In his last conversa-

* 1 Corinthians xv. 6.

tion with them, before his death, he said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of the things that are mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and show it unto you.* After his resurrection he repeated more than once the same promise. In the Acts it is recorded, "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs; being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."†

This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples "were all with one accord in one place." And suddenly there came a sound from hea-

* John xvi. 13—15. See also, 7—11. and xiv. 16, 17, 26

† Acts i. 3—8.

ven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

The wonders of this memorable day presented three distinct and convincing proofs of the resurrection of our blessed Lord.

1. *The change wrought in the apostles.*

When their Master was apprehended by his enemies, they forsook him and fled ; and after his resurrection, they kept themselves from public view, and assembled together privately through fear of the Jews. But on this memorable day, they suddenly laid aside all fear, and, in the presence of a great multitude, brought together by the rumour of the miracle wrought, they boldly preached the gospel. Peter, with the greatest intrepidity, not only explained the miracle, and showed it to be a fulfilment of a promise recorded by Joel the prophet, in their Scriptures, many hundred years ago, but affirmed the resurrection of Jesus Christ to be the accomplishment of a prediction delivered by David, and charged them with being his murderers ; saying, “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain.”†

So wonderful a change was instantly wrought in the apostles ; not a transient or temporary change, but one that lasted through life ; a change which no threats of Jewish rulers, nor imprisonment, nor stripes, nor dangers, nor sufferings, nor fear of death, could

* Acts ii. 1—4.

† Ib. ii. 22—33.

overcome. Always retaining the same undaunted spirit through life, they persevered in bearing testimony to the resurrection of their Lord, and in preaching his blessed gospel, till death terminated their ministry. Marvellous change! Is it not conclusive evidence, that Jesus Christ lives and reigns in heaven? Did he not send down the Holy Ghost to work this change in the hearts of his apostles? Was it not a fulfilment of his promise? But how could he have fulfilled his promise, and sent down the Holy Ghost from heaven, if he were dead, and not alive, and reigning in glory?

2. *The gift of tongues.*

No one can read this chapter, especially from the fourth to the twelfth verse with an unprejudiced mind, and interpret it according to the natural force and meaning of the terms used in narrating the miracle, and yet doubt, that the sacred writer designed to record it as a fact, that the apostles did receive the gift of knowing and speaking languages which they had not previously studied and learned in the usual way. If any, notwithstanding this record, doubt the fact itself, we refer them to the writings of the apostles in the Greek language, which they never learned, as conclusive evidence of the reality of the miracle recorded in this chapter. Here is a second proof of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ; for who, but a living and infinitely glorious person, could, by his Spirit, communicate, in an instant, the knowledge of foreign languages, to a number of human minds, so as to enable them immediately to address, in an intelligent manner, individuals to whom these languages were native?

3. *The third proof is the effect of the apostles' preaching.*

Amazement seized the multitude, when they heard these Galileans speaking in languages which they had not learned. Verses 7—12.

Conviction was produced in many minds, when Peter assured them that God had made Jesus, whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ; so that they exclaimed, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Verses 36, 37.

Three thousand embraced the gospel, and were baptized, that same day, “in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins.”

Nor was the change produced in these Jews temporary. It was a permanent and blessed change, that manifested itself in love to God and love to men. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted to all men, as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God, and having favour with all the people.” Verses 42—47.

This was truly a wonderful change! The men in whom it was produced were Jews, strongly attached to the Mosaic institutions, and violently opposed to the Redeemer. Regarding him as an impostor and blasphemer, they had a little before crucified him as such. Yet in one day their enmity and prejudices were subdued; their views of his character so changed that they believed him to be the long promised Messiah,

in whom, as their great Redeemer, they were willing to trust for salvation ; and whom they openly confessed as such, regardless of the opposition both of the people and of their rulers. What could have produced so wonderful a change in the multitude of unbelieving Jews, who, the day before, were bitterly opposed to Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified as an impostor, but the power of that same Divine Spirit who wrought the change in the apostles which we have noticed, and conferred on them the gift of tongues ; that Holy Spirit, whom the Redeemer had in fulfilment of his promise, shed down upon his disciples to convince them more fully that he was alive from the dead, and reigning in glory at his Father's right hand ?

SECTION III.

ARGUMENT FROM THE CONVERSION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

Paul was certainly a great man. Both before and after his conversion he displayed eminent talents. He was born in Tarsus, a Roman citizen, but a Hebrew of the Hebrews, being such by descent, both on his father's and his mother's side. To complete his education, he went to Jerusalem, and there studied under that celebrated master Gamaliel. He was a Jew in his views, feelings, and conduct ; a pharisee of the strictest sect.

What a wonderful contrast appears in the life of this man ! At first he entertained all the prejudices of his countrymen against Jesus Christ. Before king Agrippa, he said, " I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."* When Stephen, the first martyr

* Acts xxvi. 9.

of the Christian faith was stoned to death, Paul consented to the bloody and wicked deed. With this single act of unrighteous persecution he was not satisfied, but growing in hatred of the Redeemer's followers, he shut them up in prison, punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; "And being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even unto strange cities."* "He made havoc of the church, and entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison."† His malice unsatisfied by the miseries he had brought on the church, by his bitter persecutions, and still "breathing out threatenings and slaughters against the disciples of the Lord," he projected a plan for their extermination. He "went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."‡ Such was Saul the persecutor. How different from Paul the Christian and the Apostle!

So soon as he was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, he began to preach him as such, and that he was the Son of God. This he did at Damascus, whither he had gone on his persecuting errand; and by the strength of his arguments he confounded the Jews in that city. To save his life from being destroyed by a conspiracy among the Jews, the disciples let him down from the city wall, the gates being watched day and night by the Jews who sought to kill him. Having after this preached the gospel in Arabia, he went to Jerusalem to see the apostles; and there he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians. To save his life

* Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

† Ib. viii, 3.

‡ Ib. ix. 1, 2.

“the brethren brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him to Tarsus.”* After this Paul, in company with Barnabas, preached the gospel in many cities and through a wide extent of country and with great success. Ultimately separating from Barnabas, and choosing Silas for his companion, “he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.” Acts xv. 37—41. His travels then in spreading the knowledge of Jesus Christ, became extensive in Asia and Europe, attended by the most laborious exertions, and constant and great dangers and sufferings; so that in his epistle to the Romans, he could in truth say, “From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”†

Of his labours and sufferings for his master, he has given an impressive sketch in his second epistle to the Corinthians. “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often; in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily the care of all the churches.”‡

The spring of all these labours and sufferings, was

* Acts ix. 20—30; xi. 25, 26; xv. 37—41.

† Rom. xv. 19.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 23—28.

the supreme and fervent love which this great apostle bore to Jesus Christ. The exalted views he entertained of Him will appear from his own writings. To the Hebrews he says, "Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding," &c. To the Colossians he writes, "Who is the Image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature," by whom "were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." To the Philippians he says, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."*

Entertaining these views of Christ, he told the Corinthians, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Writing to the Galatians, he exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."†

Entertaining such exalted views of Jesus Christ, he held that his glory ought to be the great end of all men: "For none of us," says he to the Romans, "liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live there-

* Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 14, 17. Phil. ii. 6.

† 1 Cor. ii. 2. Gal. vi. 14; ii. 20.

fore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."*

Inflamed with love to Christ, and zeal for his glory, nothing could divert this great man from the work to which he was called. Wealth could not allure, nor honour seduce, nor danger deter, nor sufferings withdraw him from his chosen course of obedience. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."† Thus sustained by his love to Christ, he persevered, with unshaken constancy and unabated diligence, in his apostolic work, till he could say at the close of life: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."‡

Such is the contrast between the two periods in the life of Paul. How remarkable! How great! His enmity to the Saviour was converted into the most affectionate and devoted love; his determined opposition to his cause into the warmest and most unwavering attachment; his bitter and malignant persecution of his followers into the most earnest, laborious, and persevering exertions to multiply them, both among the Jews and the Gentiles!

How shall we account for this singular change in

* Rom. xiv. 7—9.

† Phil. iii. 7—9.

‡ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

the mind, heart, and conduct of this great man? The cause must have been powerful. What was it? It is stated in the Acts of the Apostles. It was a sight of the Redeemer, and a conviction that He was alive from the dead, and reigning in ineffable glory. While Paul was on his persecuting errand to Damascus, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," the Redeemer was pleased to reveal himself to his malignant enemy. A light from heaven, brighter than the sun, was thrown around him. "He fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."* He went to the city; "and he was three days without sight, neither did he eat nor drink." Ananias was sent to him, that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. He did receive his sight, and was baptized. And being taught the gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ, he was fully convinced that he was risen from the dead, and that he was the Son of God; and, therefore, without conferring with flesh and blood, he began immediately to preach him as the Son of God, the long promised Messiah.† In his conviction that Christ was alive and sitting at the right hand of God, Paul became still more and more assured by the success of his preaching, by the miracles he was enabled to work in the

* Acts ix. 1—6; xxvi. 13.

† Ib. ix. 20; Gal. i. 11, 16.

name of Christ,* by the abundant revelations made to him,† and by the abounding consolation he received from Christ.‡

In these circumstances, and having such overpowering evidence of the truth, it was impossible for Paul to doubt the resurrection of Jesus Christ, or that he was indeed the Son of God. Paul was no deluded fanatic; he had a sound, well balanced mind. His whole life after his conversion proves this. On all occasions he acted with propriety, wisdom, and dignity. Does any one demand proof of this? Let him read his reply to the message of the magistrates at Philippi, (Acts xvi. 37;) his address at Athens, (ch. xvii. 22—31;) his inquiry of the centurion when bound for examination by scourging, (ch. xxii. 25;) his declaration by which he divided the Jewish council, (ch. xxiii. 6;) his speech before Felix, (ch. xxiv. 10—21;) his subsequent reasoning before the same Roman governor, which made him tremble, (ch. xxiv. 24, 25;) his speech before king Agrippa, (ch. xxvi. 2—29;) and his noble address to the elders of the church of Ephesus; ‘Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons; serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Gentiles, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And

* Acts xix. 11; Rom. xv. 18, 19. † 2 Cor. xii. 7. ‡ Ib. i. 5.

now, behold, I go bound in spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."*

This great and benevolent man was beyond all question, fully convinced of the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and every one that considers the nature and the fulness of the evidence that wrought this conviction in his mind, and the proof that this evidence was afforded to him, must come to the same conclusion in regard to this great fact that lies at the foundation of our holy religion.

Thus the resurrection of our Lord is proved by signs from heaven,—by the visions of angels,—by his various appearances to his disciples,—by the wonders of the day of Pentecost, and by the conversion of Paul the apostle.

Against all this accumulated evidence, what have the Jews to offer? The story which they bribed the Roman soldiers to circulate: "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept."† Let us look at this story. The disciples of Christ forsook

* Acts xx. 17—27.

† Matthew xxviii. 11—15.

him and fled, when he was apprehended by his enemies ; yet these timid men had the boldness to go at night to the sepulchre, which they knew to be shut up by a great stone, well secured and sealed, and guarded by a band of Roman soldiers ; and, in their presence, break the seal, roll away the stone, and carry off the dead body of their Master ! The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when he told them he would rise from the dead, nor did they expect this event ;* yet they stole away the body of Jesus, with a view to found upon the absence of his body from the sepulchre a story of his resurrection ! It was death for a Roman soldier to sleep at his post, yet this Roman band were asleep ! They were asleep, and of course could neither see nor hear what was doing about them ; yet they affirm the disciples came and stole away the body of Jesus ! How ridiculous the story ! It will not bear examination.

It is conceded, that the body of Jesus, which had been laid in the sepulchre, was not there on the third day after his death. If his disciples had stolen it, the Jewish rulers, by searching the city, might have recovered, and reproduced it ; and thus convinced all that Jesus had not risen from the dead. Why was not this done ? How vain the attempts of men to frustrate the purposes of heaven ! Jesus is risen from the dead, and lives forevermore.

This great fact might be also established by considering the great and rapid success of the gospel, subsequent to the day of Pentecost, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles ; how a few unlettered men (one excepted) without power, without influence,

* Luke xxiv. 21—24.

without patronage, subdued Jewish prejudices and unbelief, and Gentile scorn and idolatry, simply by publishing the story of the cross ; although opposed by the influence of the Scribes and Pharisees, the wisdom of philosophers, the malice of priests, and the authority and power of rulers. But we forbear.

PART II.

IN the First Part, we have presented the argument in favour of the divine authority of the Bible, derived from a consideration of the plan adopted by God for communicating and preserving his revelation; and from the miracles and the fulfilment of prophecies which the Bible records. In this part we shall exhibit the argument that can be derived, from a consideration of its interesting instructions in relation to God and man—from its moral code—from the great work of redemption—from the adaptation of the Bible to the wants and necessities of fallen man—and from its beneficial influence on his character and happiness, and on human society. A careful examination of these points will prove the heavenly origin of this wonderful book.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES OF GOD.

SECTION I.

IT TEACHES THE UNITY OF GOD.

IDOLATRY universally prevailed among all nations when Moses began to write his portion of the Bible. The chosen tribes of Israel were not free from this degrading and stupid sin. They were polluted and

dishonoured by it, while dwelling in Egypt. So prone were they to fall into it, that, even at the foot of the sacred mount, after having beheld the awful and terrifying displays of Jehovah's excellent majesty, and while their leader was holding intercourse with Him, and receiving the two tables engraven with the ten commandments, they most foolishly and wickedly committed this great offence. Every where our apostate race, surrounded as they were by the most manifest exhibitions of God's creating power, so as to leave without excuse all who did not see and acknowledge his eternal power and Godhead, "becoming vain in their imaginations," and darkened in their foolish hearts, instead of glorifying God, "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Yet in the midst of this universal darkness and prevailing idolatry, Moses lifted up the lamp of truth to pour forth its heavenly light, and asserted and proclaimed the UNITY and GLORY of Jehovah.

This great truth appears in the first sentence he wrote; "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It is inculcated in all his writings. "Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is ONE LORD." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "That thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; and there is none else beside him."* All the sacred writers proclaim the same great and fundamental truth. "Neither is there any God beside thee." "I am the first, and I am the last: and beside me there is no God." "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." "Who is like unto thee, O

* Gen. i. 1. Deut. vi. 4. Exod. xx. 3. Deut. iv. 35.

LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" "O LORD God of Isaac, there is no god like thee in heaven above, or on the earth beneath." "Who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD." "The LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and the everlasting King." "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens." There is none other God but one." "To us there is one God and one Mediator."* This is a brief specimen of the language of the Bible in reference to the *unity* of the Supreme Being. Most distinctly and harmoniously do all its writers concur in teaching this first and fundamental principle of all true religion. They pour contempt on idols, and lash idolaters with the severest and most deserved ridicule.

How reasonable the instruction of the Bible on this point! Does not the *unity* of God command itself to enlightened reason? There can be but one infinite mind, but one Supreme Being. The unity of design discoverable in creation, the order and harmony of the heavenly bodies in their courses, prove their Maker to be ONE INFINITE INTELLIGENCE. And were not the writers of the Bible who inculcated this great truth, when men were so prone to abandon it, divinely inspired to enlighten a benighted world? If they were not, how shall their steady perseverance, for a long course of ages, in inculcating on the minds of their fellow-men, a truth, which their wicked hearts inclined them to reject, be accounted for? Why did they not like heathen philosophers, yield compli-

* 2 Samuel vii. 22. Isaiah xliv. 6; xlivi. 10. Exodus xv. 11. 1 Kings viii. 23. Psalm lxxxix. 6. Jeremiah x. 10, 11. 1 Corinthians viii. 4. 1 Timothy ii. 5.

ance with the prevailing idolatrous worship? Why did they boldly maintain the truth, and denounce against a people prone to run after idols the judgments of heaven? Was not their magnanimous conduct proof that they were under a divine influence, while asserting the exclusive claims of Jehovah to the worship of his people, and speaking in his name?

It is true we find inculcated in the Bible, the doctrine of a *Trinity*; which is regarded by some as militating with the divine *Unity*. But this is owing to the erroneous views they take of the Trinity. By this doctrine is not meant that there are three Gods. Were this taught in the Bible, it would be irreconcilable with the unity of God. This however is not the doctrine of the sacred writers. By a Trinity they mean that there are three persons in one Godhead; three modes of subsistence in one undivided divine essence. They do not teach that God is three and one in the same respect, but that he is three in one sense, and one in another sense. That there is in this doctrine a mystery, is readily admitted. We cannot comprehend it. But there is in it no contradiction. Were a contradiction involved in this doctrine, it could not be received by enlightened reason. But to a mystery disclosed in a divine revelation, no well informed mind can object; because mysteries ought to be expected in such a communication from the infinite Being. They are found in the volume of nature; they are the proper signatures of his incomprehensible greatness and grandeur! Does the first book which the Creator has opened for the instruction of his intelligent creatures, contain truths which they cannot fully understand? and would it not be unreasonable to expect that in another book, which

he has given to teach us more of his incomprehensible nature, there should be found no mysteries, no truths which we cannot fully understand ? Mysteries, we repeat it, are the signatures of his incomprehensible greatness and grandeur.

SECTION II.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

He is without beginning and without end. Had he begun to be, he would be dependent; not the first being, and consequently not God. His eternity is celebrated in the sacred Scriptures. JEHOVAH, that glorious name by which he is distinguished from all creatures, and which they restrict to him, implies *eternity*. It imports that he *is*, and always *was*. “I am that I am,” is his adorable name. How sublime the language of the inspired writers ! “For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity.” “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” “The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary.” “Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord, of hosts ; I am the first and the last.” “A thousand years are in thy sight but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” “Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” “Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise and true God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” “Who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, or can see : to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” “Before the mountains

were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.”*

SECTION III.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE INDEPENDENT GREATNESS OF GOD.

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord and thou art exalted as head above all.” “Who is so great a God as our God?” “O Lord, my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.” “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable.” “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.”†

* Isaiah lvii. 15. Deuteronomy xxxiii. 27. Isaiah xl. 38; xliv. 6. Psalm xc. 4; cii. 27. 1 Timothy i. 17; vi. 16. Psalm xc. 2.
† 1 Chronicles xxix. 11. Psalm cxlv. 3. Isaiah xl. 12—17.

SECTION IV.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

“Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.” “Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?” “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”*

SECTION V.

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

“The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.” “His eyes behold the nations.” “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine up rising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

* 1 Kings viii. 27. Psalm cxxxix. 7—10.

“The ways of man are before the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.” “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” “Can any hide himself in secret, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord.” The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” “Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.” “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.” “The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.” “He is perfect in knowledge.” “His understanding is infinite.”*

SECTION VI.

THE BIBLE ASCRIBES TO GOD INFINITE WISDOM, ALMIGHTY POWER, BOUNDLESS GOODNESS, INFLEXIBLE JUSTICE, UNDEVIATING TRUTH, UNWAVERING FAITHFULNESS IMMEASURABLE MERCY, THE RICHEST GRACE, SPOTLESS PURITY, AND GLORIOUS HOLINESS.

To quote all the passages referring to these attributes would be tedious indeed. They are scattered over the Bible; and no one can read the sacred Scriptures with attention, without observing how the sacred writers celebrate them. Let it be noted how they dwell upon the holiness of God. He is every where denominated, “The Holy One of Israel;” and represented as being incomparably pure. “Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold he putteth no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly.”

* Psalm xxxiii. 13, 14; lxvi. 7; cxxxix. 1—6, 11, 12; Proverbs v. 21; xv. 3. Jeremiah xxiii. 24. 1 Chronicles xxviii. 9. Acts xv. 18. Heb. iv. 13. 1 Samuel ii. 3. Psalm cxlvii. 5.

"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." "And one cried to another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts."*

Moreover, it is to be remembered, that Jehovah is infinite and unchangeable in these and in all his perfections. "I am the Lord, I change not." "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."†

Such are the glorious perfections which the Bible ascribes to God. Does not the mind of the reader see that they belong to the Supreme Being? Such too is the mode which the sacred writers have adopted for exhibiting them, and such a specimen of the language they use in speaking of them. Could a fitter mode be chosen for giving us a view of Jehovah's adorable perfections, or better language used for their appropriate exhibition?

The relations which God sustains to his creatures, are distinctly and fully set before us in the Bible.

SECTION VII.

GOD IS REVEALED TO US AS THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.

Heathen philosophers greatly erred in regard to the origin of the world. Some attributed its production

* Job iv. 17, 18. Hab. i. 13. Isaiah vi. 3, 5.

† Malachi iii. 6. James i. 17.

to a fortuitous concourse of atoms that had existed from eternity; as if chance, which never built a house, nor composed a book, could produce a world, in which are found displays of design, intelligence and wisdom, infinitely greater than can be found in the most finished writings of man, or in the most splendid and magnificent palace that ever adorned the earth. Others maintained the world to be eternal; and thus contended for a position disproved by their daily experience, by every change of wind, and by the innumerable mutations that are incessantly occurring in the world. What is eternal must be unchangeable. Had the world been eternal, and subject to its present changes, the highest mountains would have been levelled millions of ages past; the sun would have expended his beams of light, and darkness would have thrown over this habitation of man the pall of midnight.

The sacred writers teach a sounder doctrine; a doctrine which commends itself to the human mind. They exhibit a cause fully adequate to the mighty work. They proclaim the infinite Jehovah as the Creator of the universe; as calling it into existence with infinite ease. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."* "He created all things by the word of his power." With what simplicity and sublimity does Moses speak on this subject! "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament:

* Psalm xxxiii. 9.

and it was so. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so. He made the stars also.* In like manner speak the other sacred writers. “Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.”† “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might; for that he is strong in power: not one faileth.”‡ “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”§

SECTION VIII.

GOD IS REPRESENTED IN THE BIBLE AS THE PRESERVER AND BENEFATOR OF ALL HIS CREATURES.

He upholds all things. “The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it.” “Upholding all things by the word of his power.” “By him all things consist.” “For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”||

The liberal provision which God has made to supply the wants of all his creatures, and his great kind-

* Genesis i. 3, 6, 7, 14, 15.

† Isaiah xl. 26.

† Nehemiah ix. 6.

§ Rev. iv. 11.

|| Ps. lxxv. 3. Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 17. Acts xvii. 28.

ness towards them are set forth in sacred scripture with inimitable beauty. "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto God: who covereth the heavens with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." "These all wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good." "O! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasure. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow, nor reap; which have neither store-house, nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls! And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have

need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

SECTION IX.

GOD IS EXHIBITED TO US IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURE AS THE SOVEREIGN AND ALMIGHTY RULER OF THE UNIVERSE.

With what sublimity is his government described by the inspired writers! “The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.” “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.” “Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.” “And I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever; whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”† With what contempt does God treat the insolence of the proud, blaspheming king of Assyria; and with what perfect ease does he defeat his impious designs! “Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand:

* Ps. cxlvii. 7—9; civ. 27, 28; cvii. 8; xxxvi. 7—9. Luke xii. 24—30.

† Psalm ciii. 19; xlvi. 6; xcvi. 2. Daniel iv. 34, 35.

and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.”*

SECTION X.

GOD IS PROCLAIMED BY THE SACRED WRITERS AS THE FINAL JUDGE OF THE WORLD.

In this great truth the human mind finds relief from the perplexities that are sometimes excited by contemplating the providence of God over the world, and the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments. Looking to a future judgment the Christian can account for the present prosperity of the wicked and the present adversity of the righteous. Unbelief may say, God has forsaken the earth; he does not mind the affairs of men: but faith can affirm the consoling truth, “The Lord reigneth;” and, looking forward to a future judgment, see order rising out of confusion and light out of darkness.

How plain and decisive the language of the Bible in asserting the great truth of a future judgment! “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing.” “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” “When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and

* Isaiah xxxvii. 29, 36, 37.

all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad." "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart." "And I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."*

Such is God according to the Bible; these, his perfections, and these, the relations he sustains to his creatures. He is the eternal, independent, immense, every where present, omniscient, and almighty Being; infinitely wise and good, righteous and holy, true and faithful, merciful, gracious and forgiving: in a word, infinitely great, good, and glorious; unchangeable in his being and perfections, in his purposes, happiness,

* Jer. xvii. 10. Acts xvii. 30, 31. Matt. xxv. 31, 32. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Rev. xx. 12. Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

and glory. He is the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, who spake the universe into existence; he upholds by his power all worlds, supplies from his bounty the wants of every creature; he inspects and controls the conduct of men, and overrules all their actions; he will, in the last day, judge the whole human race, bestow on the righteous everlasting life, but condemn the wicked to everlasting misery. What an awful, glorious, lovely Being! How worthy of the praise, and love, and obedience of all intelligent creatures! Must not every reasonable mind assent to all this as true? Does it not accord with the judgment of our understanding, just as the light does with the eye? Does not this exhibition of the character, perfections, and relations of God, carry with it its own and irresistible evidence? Is it not seen, in its own light, to be true?

SECTION XI.

MANNER OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

The manner in which the sacred writers have delivered their instructions, is worthy of particular consideration. No doubt, no hesitancy appears in it. They speak with perfect confidence, as men fully assured that they are speaking the truth. How is this phenomenon to be accounted for? By whom were these men instructed? Who taught them to speak of God in a way so becoming his infinite majesty? Not the learning of the day. When Moses and the prophets wrote, when Paul and the Apostles preached, the world was full of error in regard to religion. Idolatry prevailed among all nations, except the Hebrews; and they frequently

were guilty of this stupid sin. The true knowledge of God had become nearly extinct. Yet these men, who live among a people, not remarkable for science or literature, have, in opposition to prevailing errors, written of God and his perfections, of his works and government, in a way far surpassing the writings of the wisest and most celebrated heathen philosophers. How shall this be explained? How can it be explained, but by referring to the true source of wisdom, by believing they were taught of God, and wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost? Must not the book which contains such heavenly and necessary instructions be divine? Is it not the gift of God?

CHAPTER II.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES OF MAN.

THE Bible furnishes us with the natural, moral, and future history of man.

SECTION I.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MAN.

By Moses we are taught that, on the sixth day, it pleased God to create out of the dust of the ground the first human pair, and that he breathed into them the breath of life; that this happy and innocent pair were placed in paradise, a garden planted by the Lord with every tree and shrub that could beautify and adorn it; that they lived in this delightful garden, till they were expelled from it, on account of their sin

in eating the forbidden fruit; and that from this one pair have sprung all the nations of the world, and every human being. Cain and Abel were their first two sons. Provoked by envy at the divine approbation of his brother's offering, Cain slew his righteous brother, and brought on himself the curse of the Almighty. Of this murderer the sacred historian gives some account, and traces his descendants through several generations. In place of Abel was born Seth, whose posterity is specially noticed down to the time of Noah; when God, in his just wrath at the apostasy and prevailing wickedness of the human race, brought upon the world a universal deluge; which destroyed the whole race of man, with the exception of Noah and his family. Noah became the great progenitor of the postdiluvian race.

By his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, was the world, after the flood peopled. In the tenth chapter of Genesis, Moses has given an account of their descendants; from which learned men have, with much probability, shown what portions of the earth were occupied by the different branches of Noah's family. Paul, in his address to the Athenians, affirms that "God hath made of one blood all the nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."*

Is not this natural history of man true? Who can disprove it? Will difference in colour be urged as an objection against the unity of the human family? This difference, which is only external, can be accounted for by the effects of climate, habits of living, and other causes. But if adequate causes could not be assigned, the common origin of our race ought not to be questioned; when we consider how alike all

* Acts xvii. 26.

men are in the structure of their bodies, in the faculties of their minds, in their moral constitution, and in all their essential points.

SECTION II.

THE BIBLE CONTAINS THE MORAL HISTORY OF MAN.

Man was, at his first creation, a perfect creature, adorned with the moral image of his Creator; perfectly free from sin, disposed and able to do the will of God. With this holy creature, enriched with heavenly endowments, and formed for immortality, the Most High condescended to enter into a covenant; promising life to obedience, and threatening death to disobedience. But endowed as he was with ample ability to keep the divine law, and prompted by the most powerful motives to obedience, he was, by the artifices of Satan, seduced to eat of the forbidden fruit, and thus to transgress the divine law, to the ruin of himself and all his posterity.*

Here is the origin of all the sin and misery in the world. All may be traced to the first sin of man in paradise. That sin opened a deluge of wickedness and misery, that has never ceased to roll onward its destructive waves. "By one man," says Paul, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners."† The sacred writers represent our fallen race as being exceedingly depraved. "And

* See the first three chapters in Genesis. † Rom. v. 12, 18, 19.

God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." " You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."*

Is not this moral history of man true? Does it not commend itself to the reflecting mind? Here is given a rational account of the universal prevalence of depravity in the world. The fact that all men are sinners is undeniable; and the universality of the disease shows it must have some common origin. But what that origin was, the wisdom of the world could not discover. Philosophers speculated about it in vain. They were as ignorant in this matter as the common people. But Moses and other writers of the Bible have revealed the sad, but interesting truth. They have traced up the universal depravity of men, of all ages, to one common source, the apostasy of the first man, the father of the human race. This explains facts, which, without this information, could not be explained. This accounts for the early evidences of depravity seen in the temper and conduct of children, prior to the time when they feel the influence of example; and for the fact that infants suffer pain, sickness, and death. " Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."†

* Genesis vi. 5; Romans viii. 7; Ephesians ii. 1.

† Romans v. 14.

SECTION III.

**THE BIBLE HAS ALSO FURNISHED US WITH THE FUTURE HISTORY
OF OUR RACE.**

The Bible teaches distinctly that man is immortal; that his spirit will survive the stroke of death, by which the body is deprived of life and reduced to its original elements, dust and ashes; that we shall exist, after death, in a state of happiness or misery, according to our conduct in the present life; that the dead will be raised in the last day, and all mankind be summoned to appear before the bar of God, to undergo a strict and impartial judgment; and that the righteous will be adjudged to everlasting blessedness and glory, and the wicked condemned to everlasting shame and misery. That this doctrine is exceedingly interesting, can be denied by no sober and reflecting man. And is it not true, as well as interesting? None will venture to contradict it, but men whose guilt dreads the thought of a future state, and whose crimes induce them to wish to lose their existence in the grave. Immortality accords with the nature of man and the attributes of his Creator. Is it not reasonable to believe that a creature endowed with such noble faculties, so capable of constant and progressive improvement, was designed to exist for a much longer period than he is permitted to spend in this world? Is it not reasonable to believe that the righteous Sovereign of the universe will hereafter correct the apparent disorders prevalent in this distant province of his universal empire, by a future judgment, when he shall give to every man his due; when the proud oppressor shall be put down, and the humble and pious Christian freed from his cruel oppres-

sion, and exalted in honour? To the truth of this, has not every man a witness in himself? What but a judgment to come does conscience indicate, when it rebukes the midnight transgressor, and makes him tremble, when he commits in secret and in darkness a sin that has been witnessed by no human eye? Is not the impression of this belief on the public and popular mind, a matter of the first importance to the welfare and stability of human society? What can be a better defence against the prevalence of destructive crimes, and a more powerful inducement to the practice of every virtue? Extinguish this belief, and what will human laws avail to secure the rights of the weak against invasion, injustice, violence, and wickedness?

An indistinct impression of a future state of rewards and punishments, was always prevalent, more or less, among the heathen. Their poets sung of such a state, and their philosophers reasoned on the subject, with doubtful and wavering arguments. But the sacred writers speak on the subject with the confidence of men assured they were uttering the truth. They use no feeble arguments; no doubt is discoverable in their writings. They speak as eye and ear-witnesses deliver their testimony. Hear their language. "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things

which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me in that day; and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing." "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord." "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye

to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

SECTION IV.

INSPIRATION OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

From these quotations it is apparent how much at home the sacred writers are, when speaking of future and eternal things. They speak of them as of things with which they are familiarly acquainted. No

* John xiv. 1—3. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; v. 1—4. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.
1 Thess. iv. 14—17. 2 Pet. iii. 10—14. 1 Cor. xv. 51—57.

doubt, no hesitancy rests upon their minds. They speak what they know. They are fully assured of the truth. Whence did they gain this knowledge and full conviction? Not from the writings of heathen philosophers. Such knowledge could not be found in their schools. Philosophers needed to be taught these great truths, as much as the common people. Nor did they derive their information from the Jewish schools; for they never studied in them. Paul indeed was a pupil of the celebrated Gamaliel; and from him he may have learned a future state of rewards and punishments; for it was taught in the writings of Moses, and the prophets. But the light which he and his fellow apostles threw around the things of a future world, was far superior to that which Moses and the prophets had imparted to the ancient church. Whence then did they derive this superior light? Who made these illiterate men wiser than heathen philosophers, and wiser than all the teachers who had ever gone before them? How is this phenomenon to be solved? Were not these men taught from above? How could they speak of heavenly and eternal things, with such propriety, confidence, and dignity, if they had not been inspired with heavenly wisdom? Inspiration from above they claimed; and do not their invaluable writings fully sustain the truth of their claim?

CHAPTER III.

MORAL CODE OF THE BIBLE.

THE moral code contained in the Bible, furnishes evidence of its inspiration and decisive authority.

It bears the impress of its heavenly origin. So excellent, so reasonable, so pure, so holy, so spiritual, so perfect is it, that it could have proceeded only from infinite wisdom and goodness. Human minds, blinded, depraved, and prejudiced as they are by sin, could not be the authors of such a system of morals. That the reader may be convinced of this, we shall lead him to examine the moral code of the Bible, under the following heads.

SECTION I.

THE SUMMARIES OF DUTY FOUND IN THE BIBLE.

The first we meet with in reading the Scriptures is the ten commandments; which the Bible affirms were engraven on two tables of stone by the finger of God, and delivered by Moses to the children of Israel. The first table contained the duties we owe to God; and the second, the duties we owe to our fellow creatures. Short as these commandments are, they are exceedingly comprehensive. They embrace the whole round of duty.

That they are to be explained in the utmost latitude, is manifest from the nature of man, from the last commandment, which prohibits covetousness, and especially from the consideration that they prescribe

the duties we owe to a Being of infinite knowledge and purity. Besides, the Bible teaches us thus to interpret the law. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."* How admirable this summary of duty! Nothing like it can be found in all the writings of heathen philosophers.

A still shorter summary is pointed out by our great teacher, Jesus Christ. Being asked by a Jewish lawyer, "Which is the great commandment, in the law?" he replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."† These two precepts comprehend, beyond doubt, every human obligation and duty. From such love in the heart, every act of duty to God and man, would as certainly follow, as a pure stream would flow from a full and pure fountain. No man can love God in this perfect manner, and refuse to do any thing he requires. He would delight to do his whole will. And equally certain is it, that he would, under the influence of such love to God, love his neighbour as himself: and loving his neighbour in this perfect manner, he would abstain from doing him any injury, and cheerfully render to him whatever was due. The obedience which God demands is the obedience of love. It must spring from love. Love is the life and soul of obe-

* Matt. v. 27, 28. 1 John iii. 15. † Matt. xxii. 36—40.

dience. Destitute of this animating principle, all external acts of homage, how correct and beautiful soever they may appear, are like a lifeless corpse.

Does not this summary of duty command itself to every human mind? Is it not seen, in its own light, to be perfectly reasonable? Who can deny that we ought, in this manner to love infinite excellence and loveliness? Who can refuse to admit the justice of the precept that requires us to love as ourselves our neighbour, who is “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh?” To find in the volumes of pagan philosophers any thing comparable to this summary of moral duty, would be a vain attempt.

The Saviour’s golden rule has been justly admired: “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”* It sheds light to dispel the illusions of selfishness, and brings conviction to the conscience. What a cluster of duties, most attractively exhibited, do we see in that passage of Paul: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”†

SECTION II.

THE DETAILS OF DUTY.

In respect to God there are particular precepts requiring us to fear, to seek, to reverence, and to worship him; to believe, to trust, to hope, to delight, and to rejoice in him; to honour, to obey, and to glorify

* Matt. vii. 12.

† Phil. iv. 8.

him. In respect to ourselves there are precepts enjoining temperance in eating and drinking, chastity and purity, contentment with our condition, activity and industry, meekness and humility, resignation, patience and fortitude. In respect to others, the precepts of the Bible require us to love all men, without excepting our enemies; to be honest in all our dealings; to be just in every transaction; to live in peace with all men, as far as it may be possible; to be merciful towards the unfortunate, giving alms to the poor, and relieving the oppressed; to be gentle in our deportment; to love our enemies, and to forgive them, to pray for and do them good; and to let our light shine before others, that they may be incited to imitate our example, and constrained to glorify God.

These and a variety of other duties are inculcated in the sacred Scriptures. The duties, too, growing out of the different relations of life; such as the relation between husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, pastors and people, rulers and citizens, are all particularly specified. But to exhibit in quotations all the duties referred to, would require a transcription of a large portion of the Bible.

Mark the wisdom manifested in this moral code. The summaries of duty can be easily committed to memory, without burdening it; while the copious details in the various branches of moral obligation, serve to explain the meaning of the summaries, and to assist us in applying the general rules to particular cases as they rise in life,

SECTION III.

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE MORAL CODE.

The Bible does not overlook external conduct. It prescribes rules for the due government of our outward actions, and requires their submission to divine authority. “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”* Outward actions are an index to the inward temper. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”† But external conduct will not satisfy the claims of the divine law. It is inadequate to meet its demands; and it may be deceptive. A man may give alms to be seen of men; or he may pretend great compassion for the needy and distressed; he may say, “Be ye warmed, and filled,” but withhold the necessary food and clothing. Here that correspondence between the state of the heart and the outward actions, which the divine law requires, is broken. The Bible connects principle and conduct together, and insists on the obedience of both. It demands a pure heart and a holy life. But it insists chiefly on the former. In the religion of the Bible, the heart is every thing. The great claim which God prefers is this: “My son, give me thine heart.” While this is withheld no offering can be acceptable. “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even unto me will all your heart, and with fasting, and with weep-

* Rom. vi. 12, 13.

† Matt. xii. 34.

ing, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteſt him of the evil." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."* Such importance does the Bible attach to the obedience of the heart. It is the altar that sanctifies the gift. Without it no homage, however profound, no sacrifice how costly soever, no faith however strong, can avail to obtain divine approbation. With what force and energy does Paul assert this truth! Love, in his view, has pre-eminence over every other grace. He shows it to be essential to the Christian character. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." And then after a beautiful description of charity (love,) the apostle adds, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these

* Proverbs xxiii. 26. Joel ii. 12, 13. Psalm li. 17. 1 Tim. i. 5.
Psalm xxiv. 3, 4. Matt. v. 8.

three; but the greatest of these is charity."* In what system of morals framed by human wisdom, will you find such pre-eminence given to the heart? Men, untaught by the Spirit of God, turn away from the true spring of obedience; and instead of labouring to purify the spring, spend their efforts in endeavouring to cleanse the streams. They assign the pre-eminence to manners and outward behaviour. Like the Pharisees of old they wash "the outside of the cup and of the platter," and pay but little or no attention to the defilements within. The obvious truth stated by our Lord is overlooked: "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things."† As the Bible traces all obedience to the heart, so it traces all disobedience to the same source: "Out of the heart proceed," says the great teacher, "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The heart forms, in the eye of God, the character of every man. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits." "And all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to your works."‡

SECTION IV.

THE PERFECTION OF THE BIBLE'S MORAL CODE.

No commutation of one duty for another is allowed. To Saul who alleged he had obeyed the voice of

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3, 13.

† Matt. xii. 35; xv. 19.

‡ 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Prov. xvi. 2. Rev. ii. 23.

the Lord, Samuel replied, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." With what indignant language did God rebuke his people by Isaiah his servant? "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." How did our Saviour detect and expose the hypocrites of his day! "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."*

No partial obedience that excepts to any precept,

* 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. Isaiah i. 11—15. Matt. xxiii. 23.

can obtain divine approbation. "If," said David, "I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The Pharisee went to the temple to pray, and boasted of his goodness: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." Proud in spirit, his prayers were not regarded. "Then," says David, "shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments?" And by the Apostle James it is laid down as an adjudged case in our religion: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The meaning is, he who allows himself habitually to break one precept, breaks the whole law, of which it is an essential part; just as the man who wounds my hand, inflicts a wound upon my whole body, of which my hand is a member. He comes under the curse, by which the whole law is sanctioned; and, by his wilful and habitual violation of one precept, shows that, even in his apparent observance of the rest, he is insincere, and not influenced by the required principle, and affectionate regard for that divine authority from which the whole law has emanated. "Good Master," said a promising young man to our Saviour, "what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him—Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the

poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”*

The law of God demands ENTIRE PERFECTION.

The very “thought of foolishness,” is pronounced by it to be “sin.” It denounces a curse against every transgression: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Christians are required to cleanse themselves “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.” Having expounded the law in its full and spiritual meaning, and set aside the corrupt glosses, by which the Jewish scribes had clouded, diminished, and altered its requirements, Jesus Christ subjoined this injunction: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” And Paul, with his great attainments in piety, acknowledged his failing to reach the high standard at which he was aiming: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Jesus Christ. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”†

* Psalm lxvi. 18. Luke xviii. 11—14. Psalm cxix. 6. James ii. 10. Mark x. 17—21.

† Prov. xxiv. 9. Gal. iii. 10. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Matt. v. 48. Phil. iii. 12—14.

SECTION V.

THE END OF THE MORAL SYSTEM INculcATED IN THE BIBLE IS, THE GLORY OF GOD.

That a regard to our own reputation and advantage in leading a life of piety, is allowable, will appear from the following passages in holy Scripture. “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense of the reward.” And of one greater than Moses, it is written, “Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.”* Personal advantage is proposed in Scripture as a motive to religion: “Get wisdom, get understanding; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forget her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.” “Let your loins be girded about,” said our Lord, “and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he

* Hebrews xi. 24—26; xii. 2.

cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and shall find them so, blessed are those servants.” “Who will render unto every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life.” “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”*

But while we are permitted, in yielding obedience to the divine commandments, to have respect to our own personal advantage, and to expect to receive that happiness and glory which God has graciously been pleased to promise for our encouragement; we are required to aim at *his glory*, as the ultimate end of all our acts of obedience. This is expressly taught; “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” “Whether therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Rebuking the impious king of Babylon, the prophet said, “The God in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.”†

How reasonable and just is this requisition! The Supreme being, who made, upholds, and governs us; who is infinite in his perfections, and compared with

* Prov. iv. 5—9. Luke xii. 35—38. Rom. ii. 6, 7. Rev. ii. 10; iii. 21.

† Matt. v. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 20; x. 31. Dan. v. 23.

whom, we, and all creatures are but as the dust of the balance; is certainly entitled to the first place in our hearts, and to receive from us the highest possible honour that we can offer? He certainly is worthy to receive from us and all intelligent beings the noblest ascriptions of praise, and honour, and power, and glory: "For all things were created by him; and for his pleasure they are and were created."

SECTION VI.

THE SANCTIONS OF THE BIBLE.

These belong to its moral code. More weighty and powerful sanctions than those which the Bible proposes, cannot possibly be conceived by the human mind.

1. The law emanating from the Supreme Lawgiver of the universe, comes to us clothed with his infinite authority. Not man, not an angel, not the highest creature in existence, but God, the Almighty Creator of all worlds, speaks its commandments. He who is possessed of infinite perfections; He who made, preserves, and blesses us; He who is entitled to all possible honour and homage—He has proclaimed his will in the Scriptures. To disobey a law issuing from Him, and coming enforced by his authority, is rebellion, the most unjust and ungrateful, the most impious and daring.

2. God, who has proclaimed his law, is represented by the sacred writers, as constantly inspecting the conduct of his creatures. "The Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." "His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings." "The ways of man are be-

fore the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings." "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." "Can any hide himself in secret, that I shall not see him ? saith the Lord." "Thine eyes are upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give to every one according to his ways; and according to the fruit of his doing." "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."* In language so plain and forcible, is the constant and watchful superintendence of God over the conduct of men asserted in the sacred Scriptures.

3. The rewards and punishments, by which obedience to the divine law is enforced, are exceedingly great. They are co-extensive with our being. They pertain not only to this, but to the next world ; they are eternal as well as temporal. Obedience is rewarded, not only by health and comfort, by prosperity and honour, by peace of mind and joyful hope, in this life, but by everlasting happiness and glory in the world to come. Disobedience is punished, not only by afflictions and sickness, by trouble and disappointment, by disquietude of mind and fearful apprehension of future judgment, in the present state ; but by shame and everlasting misery in the next world. "God will render to every one according to his deeds ; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life ; but to them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." In the day of judgment the Judge will

* Ps. xi. 4. Job xxxiv. 21. Prov. v. 21. Jer. xxiii. 24, xxxii. 19. Heb. iv. 13.

"say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :"—and "to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."*

SECTION VII.

EXAMPLES OF PIETY AND OBEDIENCE, SET BEFORE US IN THE SCRIPTURES.

How numerous, shining, and stimulating the examples we find in the Bible! Patriarchs and prophets, kings and priests, apostles and martyrs, who have "fought the good fight, and finished their course with joy," now form a cloud of witnesses to encourage, to allure, and to quicken us, in our exertions to do the will of God, and accomplish the work assigned us by his providence. The *piety* of Enoch, who, in a world filled with wickedness, "walked with God;" the *faith* of Abraham, who "when he was called to go out in a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed," and "went out, not knowing whither he went;" and who, when tried, offered up Isaac, "his only begotten son;"—the *chastity* of Joseph, who, when tempted by his mistress, exclaimed, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"—the *meekness* and *magnanimity* of Moses, who declined the offered honour of having his seed increased into a great nation, and prayed he might not live to survive the destruction of his people;—the *integrity* of Samuel, who appealed to his countrymen to bear witness that he had never perverted

* Romans ii. 6—9. Matthew xxv. 34, 44, 46.

justice ;—the *devotion* of David, whose heart, in praising God, glowed with seraphic fire ;—Daniel, who, in an idolatrous court, maintained the *purity of religion*, and in defiance of the king's wicked decrees, prayed to God, as usual three times a day ; not fearing the threatened punishment of being cast into the lions' den ;—the *zeal*, the *benevolence*, the *magnanimity* of Paul, who, in discharging the duties of his ministry, laboured and toiled, and suffered so much, contributed so greatly to the establishment of Christianity in the world, and died so joyfully in his Master's service :—all these examples of piety and every grace, which shed such a lustre over the pages of the Bible, are set before us to incite and encourage us to imitate them, by endeavouring to keep all God's commandments. We are cheered too, by reflecting that the same grace which assisted them, can assist us, and render our exertions successful in doing and suffering his holy will.

What can ancient paganism show, in the lives of her philosophers and heroes, that can compare with these worthies of the church ? What philosophers among pagans ever loved God supremely, and worshipped him in spirit and in truth ? What philanthropist among them ever laboured and toiled to save immortal souls ?

To all these bright examples of piety and virtue exhibited in Scripture, is added the finished and perfect example of Jesus Christ. All others were imperfect. The life of no patriarch, no prophet, no saint, no apostle, was faultless. All were more or less defiled. But the life of Christ was faultless, and without a single blemish. He “did no sin, neither was guile found in his lips.” He “was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” With confi-

dence could he appeal to his malignant and watchful enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" In nothing, either in action, word, or thought, did he ever offend God. His life was a perfect transcript of the divine law.

With such an example, so pure and faultless, before them, the disciples of Christ are required to aim at perfection. In no attainment are they permitted to rest, while they, in any degree, come short of perfection. From one degree of holy obedience to another are they to advance, till they reach that spotless purity to which they are called in Christ Jesus; or to use the language of Paul, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."* In the history of our Saviour's life we have exemplified that perfection, which heathen philosophers could neither describe in words, nor even conceive in their minds.

SECTION VIII.

PROVISION MADE FOR SECURING THE OBEDIENCE OF FALLEN MAN TO THE DIVINE LAW.

This forms a singular peculiarity in the moral system of the Bible. In this it stands pre-eminent above all other systems of morals. Untaught by divine revelation, men merely lay down rules of duty, and never think of strength derived from heaven, to enable them to observe these rules. Heathen philosophers proudly relied on themselves, and boasted of virtue as their own attainment. But the Bible humbles the pride of man, by teaching us our native weakness, and to regard God as the author of every

* Ephesians iv. 13.

holy disposition, and of all upright conduct in fallen men. To his grace and renewing power it attributes regeneration, faith, repentance, a new heart, love, and universal sanctification. In proof of this let the following passages be attentively considered. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.” “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “For by grace are ye saved, through faith: and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.” “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” “But the fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of Christ, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” “By the grace of God, I am what I am.” “Abide in me, and I

in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."*

This doctrine runs through the Bible; it is found in the Old Testament as well as in the New.



CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENTS FROM THE MORAL CODE.

FROM the survey of the moral system of the Bible, in the preceding chapter, several arguments in favour of its divine original and authority, may be derived. Its superiority to all other systems in the world—its perfection—its exemption from the debasing influence of human depravity—and the provision made for securing its observance—will each furnish a good and conclusive argument.

SECTION I.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE MORAL SYSTEM IN THE BIBLE, IS EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE ORIGINAL AND AUTHORITY.

Let the summaries and details of duty, in the Scriptures, be considered; the spiritual nature of this code; the perfection of its demands; the ultimate end of its

* Ps. li. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. John i. 12, 13. Ephes. ii. 8—10. Acts xi. 18. Gal. v. 22, 23; ii. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 10. John xv. 4, 5. Ps. li. 7.

requisitions, the glory of God ; the sanctions by which obedience is enforced ; the bright and illustrious examples set before us to stimulate and encourage obedience ; and the singular provision made for securing the observance of the divine law : let all these particulars be duly considered, and the great superiority of the moral system in the Bible, to all other systems that were ever elaborated by human ingenuity and wisdom, will clearly appear. All human systems have been essentially defective. They have failed in regard to the duties we owe to God ; they have been defective in authority, and enforced by inferior and feeble motives ; and they have left fallen, sinful man to depend upon his own strength in fulfilling his duty.

How is this great superiority of the sacred writers, in stating and enforcing moral duties, to be accounted for ? It is not to be ascribed to their superior genius and learning ; for many pagan philosophers exceeded some of them in both these qualifications. The people among whom these writers lived were not distinguished by their attainments in the arts and sciences ; they were generally occupied in agricultural pursuits. Yet the sacred writers have delivered to the world a moral code incomparably superior to all others. Is not this singular fact evidence that they did, as they affirm, derive their superior wisdom in teaching men their duty, from the inspiration of God ? If they were indebted to themselves for their pre-eminence in wisdom, why did they not take to themselves the praise ? Why did they renounce the honour, by representing themselves as humble servants, commissioned to deliver the messages of their Lord and Master ? They all have spoken in the name of God. To his divine illumination they ascribed their superior knowledge.

They have published to the world, not their invention, but the law of God, as they received it from the teachings of his Spirit. "All scripture," says one apostle, "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" and another, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

SECTION II.

THE PERFECTION OF THE MORAL CODE IN THE BIBLE, FURNISHES A STRONG PROOF OF HEAVENLY ORIGIN AND DIVINE AUTHORITY.

The perfection of the Bible system appears manifest from what we have already said. The ten commandments are evidently comprehensive of all the duties incumbent on men. That supreme and intense love to God, and love to our neighbour as ourselves, on which the Redeemer teaches us that all the law and the prophets hang, must be allowed to be the principle of obedience in its utmost perfection: and it is undeniably certain, that, if this principle were found in our hearts in full vigour, it would prompt, incline, and constrain us, most willingly and delightfully, to every thing that is right, every thing that is lovely, and every thing that is noble. Nothing injurious, nothing impure, nothing sinful, could flow from such a source, so pure and holy.

Now we ask, was it possible for fallen creatures, with understandings darkened, and hearts defiled, by sin, to recover the full knowledge of God's perfect law, by the researches of their unassisted minds?

* 2 Timothy iii. 16. 2 Peter i. 31.

This question is, we think distinctly answered by the ignorance of the law that prevailed in the heathen world for four thousand years, and that still prevails in every part of the world, where the light of divine revelation does not shine. The distinction between right and wrong, has never been obliterated from the human mind; conscience has always, and still does every where, condemn sin, more or less. Yet no philosopher has ever arisen among heathen nations, to furnish them with a system of duties approximating in any degree to perfection. But Moses, who lived in the idolatrous court of Egypt, and Jesus Christ, who was brought up without education, in a despised city of Galilee, have each presented the world with a comprehensive and perfect rule of moral duty. Whence did they derive their knowledge, so superior to that of all other men? Were they not inspired by God, and thus enabled to teach what no uninspired man ever taught?

Unfallen creatures are perfect; and being perfect, they are acquainted with their duty in its full extent, and must have possessed this knowledge from the commencement of their moral agency. But how could they have been thus informed from that early period, except by divine teaching? The divine law is adapted to the relation subsisting between the Creator and his creatures; and a perfect adjustment of the law to this relation, requires a perfect knowledge both of God and of his creatures. But such knowledge no created being does or can possess; and it will follow as a consequence, that no creature, whatever may be his intellectual endowments, could, by their exercise, discover the law of God in all its perfections. He must be indebted for such knowledge to his Creator.

If this be true in regard to unfallen, holy creatures, must it not be true of fallen, sinful creatures? If holy angels, and man in his primitive condition, were indebted to God for the knowledge of his will, must it not follow as a certain consequence, that fallen man, with his mind darkened and conscience corrupted by sin, could never have discovered that perfect code of morals taught in the Bible, if it had not been revealed by the Spirit of God?

SECTION III.

THE EXEMPTION OF THE MORAL SYSTEM CONTAINED IN THE BIBLE, FROM THE DEBASING INFLUENCE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY, IS AN- OTHER PROOF OF ITS HEAVENLY ORIGIN.

The depravity resulting from our apostasy from God, has a pernicious influence over the minds, and especially the hearts of men. It has impaired their spiritual perceptions, stupefied their conscience, and alienated their hearts from God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned." "The carnal mind is enmity against God; and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Such is the testimony of Scripture; and universal experience proves its truth. Now, it is easy to see that heathen philosophers, writing under the influence of natural depravity producing such pernicious effects; men blinded in their minds by sin, and living in estrangement from God, were not competent to compile a code of moral duties that should correspond to all the relations we sustain to God and to one another. Accordingly their systems were grossly defective in

respect to duties we owe to God, as well as deficient in stating personal and relative duties. Nor was this blinding influence of sin confined to heathen philosophers; it has shown itself in the moral writings of philosophers, who have enjoyed the advantage of living under the light of divine revelation. Many social and relative duties you will find well stated and illustrated by them; but you will not find inculcated in their writings those lovely duties on which the sacred writers insist: such as humility, meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, and heavenly mindedness.

The system of moral duties exhibited in the sacred Scriptures, is entirely free from this depressing influence of human depravity. The doctrine of depravity is distinctly and fully taught by the sacred writers; its influence in blinding the understanding, in perverting the affections, and alienating the heart from God, is insisted on by them. They had themselves experience of this debasing influence; being by nature as depraved as other men; living under the dominion of sin, till it pleased God to deliver them by his grace, and continuing, more or less, subject, through life, to its misguiding influence: and yet they have presented a code of moral duties entirely free from the perverting effects of this powerful cause. No duty is lowered, so as to accommodate it to the weakness of human nature induced by the apostasy. Every one is exhibited in all its commanding claims, as if addressed to unfallen creatures. We are required not only to love God, but to love him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength; and not only to love our neighbour, but to love him as ourselves. In a word, we are commanded to be perfect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.

A singular phenomenon ! Sinful, fallen man, living in a sinful, fallen world ; surrounded with darkness and prevailing idolatry ; publishing a code of laws, that, rising above every unpropitious influence, requires the perfection in holiness, that was originally demanded from unfallen man. Can this phenomenon be explained without referring to divine inspiration ? Are we not driven to the conclusion, that these holy men wrote under the illuminating and guiding influence of the Holy Spirit ? Without this heavenly influence how could they have perceived what other men did not, and could not perceive, and publish truths which the apostasy had obliterated from the human heart ?

SECTION IV.

THE PROVISION MADE IN THE BIBLE FOR SECURING OBEDIENCE TO ITS MORAL SYSTEM, FURNISHES A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR ITS DIVINE ORIGINAL AND AUTHORITY.

The sacred writers, we have seen, teach very distinctly the doctrine, that the regeneration and sanctification of the human soul, are the work of God ; that all holy desires and heavenly dispositions come from above ; that we are authorized to pray for promised grace to assist us in doing the divine will ; in a word that the work of renovation is begun, carried on, and consummated by grace derived from Jesus Christ. This great and interesting doctrine of divine influence, in recovering our fallen race from a state of sin to a state of holiness, was familiar to the minds of the sacred writers. They speak of it, not as a doubtful matter, with hesitation, but as infallible truth, with unwavering assurance. It is interwoven with all

their writings. It is taught by them in a variety of forms; as a doctrine and as a promise, as furnishing a directory for prayer, and as prescribing a duty. The whole life of a Christian is described as originated, preserved, and consummated by divine influence. Writing to the Philippians, Paul says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus of Christ." And, in his epistle to the church of the Thessalonians, he says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."*

Whence did the sacred writers obtain this knowledge? How came their minds to be so familiar with it? And why did they inculcate the doctrine of divine influence, so fully and with such confidence? Reason was not their teacher: for if reason could peradventure suggest that God might assist individuals struggling with temptations, she could not possibly give assurance that he would regenerate and sanctify a single soul. The knowledge of the important doctrine of divine influence, as stated and illustrated in the Bible, could be derived from no other source than heavenly instructions. Nothing but the teachings of God's Spirit could furnish the apostles with such clear views of this interesting truth, as they manifestly possessed, and inspire them with such unhesitating confidence in teaching it to their fellow men.

Had it been possible for impostors to conceive such a doctrine, they would not have dared to make it a part of their system, that God would give to their

* Phil. i. 6. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.

disciples a new heart, and enable them to lead a holy life; because they might easily see, that no one of their disciples would receive grace to impart to him such a character; and consequently their cause would soon be ruined by the failure of a predicted event.

The sabbatical year was a wonderful part of the Mosaic institution. Had he not been assured that he was divinely directed, Moses would never have commanded the Israelites to let their land remain uncultivated every seventh year, much less would he have announced the promise, that God would bless them in the sixth year, and cause it "to bring forth fruit for three years."* If the idea of such an institution could have entered into the mind of an impostor, he would not have been so superlatively foolish as to adopt it, and to announce a promise which he knew would not be fulfilled; the failure of which would, in the course of a few years, ruin his cause, and cover him with shame. The institution of Moses carries on its front the marks of its heavenly origin. Both in delivering the command, and in uttering the promise, the Hebrew lawgiver acted as one assured he was acting by divine authority.

In like manner the doctrine of divine influence, as taught in the Bible, carries on its front manifest tokens of heavenly origin: for, if it were not true, it would long ago have brought discredit on our holy religion. If it had not been true, its effects would never have appeared; not a solitary individual would have undergone the transformation of character which this doctrine implies: and, if no individual had been transformed by divine grace, accompanying the preaching of the gospel, how could the gospel have gained such

* Lev. xxv. 21.

triumphs as it did in the apostles' day? How easily could its enemies have disproved the wonders said to have been wrought on the day of Pentecost! If no such transforming influence attended the gospel, would Paul, when addressing the Corinthian church, after having spoken of the vilest characters of men, have dared to appeal to them, and say: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God?" This was not the language of empty boasting, but the language of sober truth. Nothing but a divine influence could have sustained the apostles and their converts against that bitter and destructive persecution, which was carried on, both by Jews and Gentiles, for the ruin of Christianity. They felt it themselves, and their converts felt it; and its cheering, supporting, and triumphant power was seen by their persecutors, when the victims of their malice cheerfully yielded their lives in honour of their Lord and Saviour, and sang his praises on the scaffold, and at the stake. Thousands of such witnesses to the truth, bled and died. Without fear of contradiction Paul could write to the church at Thessalonica, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith

* 1 Corinthians vi. 11.

to God-ward is spread abroad ; so that we need not speak any thing. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from dumb idols to serve the living and true God ; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereded us from the wrath to come.” “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”* Is not this the language of truth ? Would Paul have written this, if he had not been assured he was stating facts ? Would he have appealed to them as having felt and experienced an influence of which they had no consciousness ? What could have induced him to act with such supreme folly ?

Divine influence in transforming the characters of men, was not confined to the apostolic period. It has pervaded the church, more or less, in every age. It shone with lustre in the glorious reformation from Popish ignorance and superstition ; when, by the preaching of Luther and his associates, such a blessed change was wrought in a large portion of Europe. It has been manifested in the signal revivals of religion which God was graciously pleased to vouchsafe to the American churches ; and in the formation of Bible and Missionary, and Tract, and Sunday School, and other religious societies of the present time. There are multitudes of living Christians, and among them thousands of talented and learned men, who profess to have experienced the transforming grace of God, and who give no doubtful evidence of the blessed change

* 1 Thess. i. 5—10 ; ii. 13.

that has been wrought in their temper and life. The intemperate have become sober ; the licentious, chaste ; the covetous, liberal ; the worldly, heavenly-minded ; the revengeful, forgiving ; the depraved, holy.



CHAPTER V.

REDEMPTION THE WORK OF GOD.

CREATION bears the impress of the Creator's infinite perfections. When an intelligent mind contemplates the heavens and the earth, and the various orbs of the firmament above ; the land and water, the mountains and valleys, the hills and plains, that compose our earth ; and carefully examines the relations which the various parts of the heavens and the earth bear to each other ; he cannot doubt that they are the work of an almighty and infinitely wise and good Being. In like manner, when he surveys the motions of the heavenly bodies, the rising and the setting of the sun, the moon, and the stars, the ebbing and flowing of the tide, the successive generations of men and other animals, the return of the seasons, the adaptation of objects to our various senses, the regular return of day and night, and its correspondence to our nature, the food provided for man and beast, and the manner in which it is produced ; he sees at once the providence of the Creator, and that the world is upheld and governed by him who made it. The Author of these works is seen in their own light.

Just so, that great work of redemption of which the Bible speaks, is known to be the work of God. It

has the signature of his glorious perfections deeply impressed on it. This will be seen, by contemplating its contrivance,—its developments,—its execution,—its application,—its benefits and results,—and its consummation.

SECTION I.

THE CONTRIVANCE OF THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION.

When God created the different parts of the world, he only spake his will. “And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.” “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.” “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.”* But when God was about to create man, the lord of this world, there was a consultation of the sacred Three: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”†

If a consultation between the sacred Three in the Godhead occurred at the creation of man, we may well suppose such a consultation held when the great scheme of his redemption was devised. The Scriptures indicate this as occurring in the counsels of eternity. It is intimated that proposals and promises were made by the Father to the Son; and that these proposals were acceded to by the Son, and a fulfilment of the promises claimed by him on the accomplishment of his

* Gen i. 3, 9, 11.

† Ib. i. 26.

work. "Ask of me," is the language of the Father to the Son, "and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Again, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."*

The Son is represented as responding: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." When the Redeemer was on the eve of finishing his work, he said, "I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."†

Of the scheme of redemption the sacred writers speak as a great mystery originating in eternity. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith." The same apostle says to the Corinthians, "But we speak the

* Ps. ii. 8; ex. 1—3. Isa. xl ix. 1—9. † Ps. xl. 6—8. John xvii. 4, 5.

wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world was, which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Again, writing to the Ephesians, he says, " Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God; according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." And again in his epistle to the Colossians, " The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." " That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*

Such is the language of the inspired writers, when speaking of the scheme of redemption. The strict propriety of it will appear as we advance in our discussion.

* Rom. xvi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. Eph. iii. 8—12. Col. i. 26, 27; ii. 2, 3.

SECTION II.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SCHEME, AS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE.

The development of the scheme of redemption occupied four thousand years. Shortly after the creation of the world, and immediately after man's apostasy, intimation was given of a coming Saviour; and, as ages rolled away, additional communications relating to him and his work, were made to mankind. During all this time the church was taught to look by faith and holy expectation, for the advent of the Messiah. Indeed the glorious scheme will not be completely developed, until time shall end, and eternity open upon the redeemed of the Lord in the highest heaven; for the grand and glorious work of saving a lost world will not be finished, till all who are to partake of the great salvation, shall have been collected around the throne of God and the Lamb, adorned with their white robes, and crowns of immortal blessedness. So sublime is this amazing scheme! The wisdom of God deemed it proper to employ a system of types to shadow forth something of the promised Redeemer. It consisted of things, such as the ark, that saved Noah and his family, the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, for healing those who were bitten by the fiery serpents, and the sacrifices appointed to make atonement for sin; and of such persons, as Adam, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and David. A system of prophecy was also instituted for developing the great scheme of redemption. Prophet after prophet, in a long succession of ages, from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, down to Malachi, under the Old Testament, and John the last prophet under the New, were

raised up and inspired of God to deliver their respective messages concerning Christ and his kingdom. Light increased more and more, till the Sun of Righteousness arose, and shone upon the world, in all his brightness, and "with healing under his wings."

At first the knowledge of the Redeemer was delivered *orally*, and transmitted, from generation to generation, by tradition from father to son, till the prevalence of wickedness and idolatry, rendered it necessary to reduce it to writing, and to commit it to the keeping of a separate and peculiar people. God, therefore, was pleased to choose Abraham and his descendants for this high and distinguishing trust. When they were multiplied into a nation, He delivered them from Egyptian bondage, "by a mighty and outstretched arm;" conducted them through the Red Sea, on dry ground; led them through the wilderness, where he was pleased to keep them forty years, sustaining them daily by manna from the skies, and water that flowed from the flinty rock, smitten by the rod of Moses. And when they were in due time settled in the land of promise, he watched over them by an extraordinary and miraculous providence, till the Messiah came. To this singular people the prophets were sent, and all their written predictions and messages were delivered.

The development of the scheme of redemption related to the *person*,—the *offices*,—and the *work*, of the Saviour.

1. His person was foretold. An indication of it was given in the first promise recorded in the Bible. In passing sentence on Satan, God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and

thou shalt bruise his heel."* This passage has already been explained; (pages 77, 78,) and we now advert to it, to show that it intimated to our first parents that the Redeemer would be more than man. A man he was to be; but a mere man could not bruise the serpent's head, or destroy the works of the devil. This achievement transcended the ability of any man, and of all men. One greater than the seed of the woman, than a mere man, was required to endure the sufferings expressed by the bruising of his heel by the serpent. This might have been inferred by our first parents from the promise. Light was thrown upon its meaning by the institution of sacrifices. Between the death of a dumb animal and the sin of a rational creature, there is no connexion; so that the prevalence of animal sacrifices can be accounted for only on the ground, that they were at first instituted by divine appointment. Abel, Moses tells us, offered "of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof; and God had respect unto Abel, and to his offering." And Paul says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gift: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."† If sacrifices were not divinely instituted, Abel could not have offered his in faith, nor would God have accepted such unprescribed worship. Sacrifices from the beginning pointed to the grand sacrifice to be offered in future time by the promised One.

By David the church was taught that the Redeemer was the *Son of God*; for it is written in the second psalm, "I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day I have begotten

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Ib. iv. 4. Heb. xi. 4.

thee." This the Jews rightly understood as teaching the divine nature of the Saviour. When our Lord assumed this title, they charged him with blasphemy in making himself God.* Isaiah proclaimed both his miraculous conception and his divine nature. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Again, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." How sublime these titles! They belong to none but the Supreme Being. Again, the same prophet, in the most animating language, announces his Godhead, by styling him not only God, but Jehovah, that incommutable name: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God! Behold, the Lord God (original, Jehovah) will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Malachi says, "The Lord (Jehovah) whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."†

But in the New Testament we have the clearest instruction, as to the natures, and person of our blessed Lord. There we are distinctly taught to believe that

* John x. 33—36. † Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6; xl. 9—11. Mal. iii. 1.

he is truly man, having the soul and body of a man, and truly God, in *one person*; there is ascribed to him every divine name, every divine attribute, every divine work, and every divine honour.

2. The offices of our Redeemer were revealed to God's ancient church. He was exhibited as the great prophet, the great high priest, and the glorious king of his people.*

3. The work to be performed by Messiah in these offices was distinctly foretold.

His work as a prophet is predicted by Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."†

His work as high priest, Daniel foretold when he said Messiah should "be cut off, but not for himself;" and that he was "to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."‡

The Redeemer's work as king, is set forth by David, as taking vengeance on his enemies, as subduing them

* Deut. xx. 18, 19. Ps. cx. 4; ii. 6. † Isa. lxi. 1—3. ‡ Dan. ix. 24, 26.

to his control, and ruling over a willing people.* Isaiah celebrates the glory of our king and of his kingdom, in the most animating strains. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."† "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes, round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged: because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."‡

* Ps. ii. 110.

† Isa. xi. 4—9.

‡ Isa. lx. 1—5.

David had before the time of Isaiah, set forth the blessedness of king Messiah's reign: "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."*

Micah, subsequently to David, said of this great king: "He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."†

Such is the language of ancient prophecy in regard to the work which Messiah had to perform, in the offices he assumed for accomplishing his glorious enterprise of saving a lost and ruined world. It will appear more clearly and distinctly, by considering

SECTION III.

ITS EXECUTION.

In the revolution of ages the time arrived, when all things which "were written in the law of Moses,

* Psalm lxxii. 6—11.

† Micah iv. 3, 4.

and in the prophets, and in the psalms," concerning the Redeemer, were to be fulfilled. "Then when the fulness of time was come," says Paul, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* The glorious Redeemer was the Son of God before he was born, and came into the world. He existed from eternity as the Son of God; and in time he assumed human nature into personal union with his divine nature. So the truth is accurately stated by the same apostle in his epistle to the Philippians, where he says of Him, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men."†

Having voluntarily assumed the nature of man, to execute the great work of redemption, he became, in all things, subject to the law by which man was governed, that he might fulfil all righteousness. He was circumcised in his infancy; and subsequently he observed all the rites and ceremonies of divine worship. He attended both the service of the temple and of the synagogue.

Being baptized by John, and having received from heaven the attestation of his Messiahship, he proceeded immediately to discharge the duties of his prophetic office, by teaching in the synagogues. In the synagogue at Nazareth, he applied to himself a signal prophecy of Isaiah, (Luke iv. 14—22) and drew forth the admiration of all who heard him speak his gracious words. From that time he, as the great prophet of the Church, persevered to the end of his

* Gal. iv. 4, 5.

† Phil. ii. 6, 7.

life, in teaching wherever he went; in the temple at Jerusalem, in the synagogues throughout Judea, in Galilee, on the mount, by the way-side, on the sea-shore; and wherever the people assembled around him to hear his heavenly wisdom. His labours in teaching were incessant. When his public instructions were ended, he taught his disciples in private; explaining to them what they did not understand, and thus preparing them for discharging the functions of that high office to which he had called them.

2. But under this head our attention must be directed especially to the Redeemer's execution of his office of High Priest, by which he wrought out our redemption in the way of a purchase. The Apostle Paul teaches, that we were redeemed with a price: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"*. Peter tells us what the price of our redemption was: "For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed ($\epsilon\lambdaντεωθητι$) with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."† The price of our redemption was the precious blood of Christ, the lamb sacrificed for us.

To describe the sufferings of our Redeemer, and their various sources, is here unnecessary. Every one who reads his life as recorded by the Evangelists, will see that they were great and multiplied. But it is important to learn from the Bible their true character and design. Let us then inquire, why Jesus Christ suffered. The inspired writers reply to this

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

† Heb. vii. 26. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

question, that he did not suffer for himself; for says one, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" and another, he "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." On his own account he could not suffer. There existed no reason for his suffering. Paul referring to his innocence, - says, "Who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins."* The sacred writers tell us distinctly that Christ suffered for us: "Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind:" and that he suffered for our sins: "For," says this apostle, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." And this they consider as a special exhibition of divine love: "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."†

But in what sense did the Redeemer suffer and die for us, and for our sins? Was it merely for our benefit, as a martyr to the truth, and as an example for our imitation? He did indeed die as a martyr to the truth; and in his life we find the best example for imitation, when enduring affliction, and especially when called to suffer persecution for our faith. But this was rather incidental to his humiliation and sufferings. Had our redemption required nothing more, than a testimony to the truth and an example of patience under suffering, no sufficient cause would have existed for the mission of the Son of God into the world. A mere creature sustained by divine grace, would have been adequate to the work, and

* 1 Pet. ii. 22. Heb. vii. 27. † 1 Pet. iv. 1; iii. 18. Rom. v. 8.

might have become our Redeemer. More than this the Bible teaches us, was required to save our lost and ruined race. While we thankfully admit that the benefits mentioned result to us from the sufferings and death of Christ, we are not to overlook the great fact, that he suffered and died to procure for us far greater blessings than these, and to accomplish a work, which no mere creature could possibly accomplish. The true character and design of the sufferings and death of the Son of God, as exhibited in the Bible, is this: They were offered to God as an expiatory sacrifice for sin; designed to satisfy his justice, turn away from us his wrath, and procure for us the remission of our sins, and reconciliation with his offended majesty. All this will appear from the passages to be quoted. Paul says, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour :" and again, "For even Christ our passover was sacrificed for us."*

In the latter text we are taught the passover was a type of Christ. What was the passover, and what its design? It was a lamb without blemish slain by the congregation of Israel, the blood of which was sprinkled "on the two side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses," to protect them against the destroying angel: "and the blood shall be to you for a token upon your houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."† Now, as Christ was our passover sacrificed for us, he has done for us really what the type signified; his blood sprinkled upon us effectually protects us against that wrath of the Almighty

* Eph. v. 2. 1 Cor. v. 7.

† Ex. xii. 3—13.

that will fall on those on whom it is not sprinkled, when he shall come to punish all the workers of iniquity.

The same great truth was typically taught to God's ancient church, by all the expiatory sacrifices that were offered under the law, and especially by the transactions of the great day of atonement. The high priest was a type of Christ; and what he did on that great day, was a typical of what our High Priest did for us. So we are distinctly and fully taught by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews. See ch. v. 1—5. viii. 1—5. ix. 1—15. x. 1—14. In Leviticus xvi., we have a particular account of the ceremonies, transactions, and sacrifices of that day, when the high priest "made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." verse 17. But what is particularly worthy of notice, is the statement contained in verses 21, 22. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, *putting them upon the head of the goat*, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat *shall bear upon him all their iniquities* unto a land not inhabited." How was this type fulfilled in Christ? He was at once the High Priest who offered, and the victim that bore away our sins. Our sins were laid upon him; for says the prophet, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord

hath LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL.”* With this language of the evangelical prophet accords that of the apostle, when speaking of Christ, he says, “Who his own self *bare our sins* in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”†

The truth is uttered in language still more emphatic by Paul. “For he hath made him to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”‡ How was the sinless Redeemer made *sin* for us? He was not made sin in the abstract, he was not converted into sin. But he was, some will say, made a sin-offering. Well, what will this imply? Many animals were slain for food in Judea; but they were not sin-offerings. To render an animal a sin-offering, it was necessary for a transgressor to take his intended victim to the temple. There, when he had confessed his sin over the head of the animal, and thus laid upon it his sin, it was slain by the priest. So, if our sins had not been laid on the Saviour; if he had not been held responsible for them, and borne the penalty due to them, he could not, according to the import of the types, have been a sin-offering. That our sins are taken away by this great expiatory sacrifice, is taught with great plainness and fulness. “But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by *his own blood* he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of

* Isa. liii. 5, 6.

† 1 Peter ii. 24.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.

the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" How clearly this teaches us that the blood of Christ takes away the guilt and stain of works deserving the punishment of death; and so enables us, with freedom and confidence, to worship and serve God! "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son," says John, "cleanseth us from all sin."*

The whole truth is comprehended in a single passage, in Paul's epistle to the Romans: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood, to declare his *righteousness* for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time his *righteousness*; that he *might be just*, and the *justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus."†

Having completed the execution of his priestly office on earth, our Redeemer rose from the dead, ascended on high, passed through the heavens, and appeared in the presence of God, as our advocate. There he ever lives to present the merits of his great sacrifice, and to intercede for his Church.‡ What was typified by the entrance of the Jewish high priest into the most holy place on the great day of atone-

* Heb. ix. 11—14. 1 John i. 7.

† Rom. iii. 21—26.

‡ Heb. iv. 14; vi. 20.

ment, to sprinkle the blood of his sacrifices upon and before the mercy-seat, and to cover it with the cloud of the burning incense; was realized by our great High Priest. Lev. xvi. From this fact the apostle draws an inference full of consolation: "Wherefore, he is able also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

3. When the Redeemer had entered into heaven as our great High Priest, he took his seat at the right hand of God, and was invested with all the powers and honours and prerogatives of universal King. He was made head over all things to his Church.† There he reigns, and will reign for ever. Thence he sends down his gifts and blessings on his Church; the first displays of which were given on the day of Pentecost, and were continued, in a greater or less degree, during the apostolic period: so that the gospel triumphed over all opposition, and converts were greatly multiplied in Jerusalem, and Judea, and throughout the Gentile world. The divine influences of the Holy Spirit, which began on that memorable day to be shed down on sinful men, were continued till the Roman empire became Christian, and the cross was seen upon the throne of the Cæsars. His gifts were indeed suspended, in a great measure, during the dark ages; but, when the period of the glorious Reformation arrived, they were again bestowed in rich abundance, for effecting the revival of religion that then blessed the world with the return of light and grace and truth. The Redeemer still reigns in glory; he still gives to our wretched world the tokens of his power and love; he still maintains his kingdom

* Heb. vii. 25.

† Heb. i. 3. Phil. ii. 9—11. Eph. i. 20—23.

on earth : and when the time shall arrive for its universal extension, he “ will pour out his Spirit on all flesh,” that all men may partake of his grace, and behold his glory. “ His rest shall be glorious.”*

SECTION IV.

APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION.

On this point, but little need be said. The word is the means, the ministry the instrument, and the Holy Spirit the agent in applying salvation to the souls of sinful men.

The word read and preached is the appointed means. It regenerates and sanctifies sinners.† By the word they are convicted of sin, and learn their lost and ruined state by nature and by practice; by it they are taught the gracious provision God has made for their salvation through the mediation of his Son; and by it they are led to repentance, faith, and holy obedience.

The ministry is the appointed instrument for preaching the gospel, and is used for converting sinners, and for building up believers in their most holy faith and love.‡

But it is never to be forgotten, that both the word and the ministry depend, for all their efficiency and success, on the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit. Without his almighty aid Paul is nothing, and Apollos is nothing, and the word is a dead letter.§ The gift of the Spirit was promised by the Redeemer to render the gospel successful; and it is his to convince “ the world of sin, and of righteousness and of

* Joel ii. 28. Isaiah xi. 10. † 1 Pet. i. 23. John xvii. 17.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 24; iv. 15. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Eph. iv. 11—13.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 5—7; ii. 14.

judgment."* It is his efficiently to renew and sanctify, to adorn believers with every grace and virtue, to sustain and comfort them through their whole course on earth, and to bring them at last to glory.

SECTION V.

THE BENEFITS AND RESULTS OF REDEMPTION.

They are numerous, and unutterably important. Of these benefits only a bare enumeration will be presented. They are forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, regeneration and sanctification, restoration of the lost divine image, justification and peace with God, adoption into his family, and filial intercourse with him as a father, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to sanctify us, to bear witness with our spirits that we are the Lord's, to be an earnest in our hearts of the heavenly inheritance, to comfort and sustain us in every affliction and trial, to seal us unto the day of redemption, victory over death, admission into heaven, a glorious resurrection of our bodies from the dead, acquittal in the day of judgment, and eternal life and glory.

The results of redemption are a glorious exhibition of the perfections of God; of his infinite wisdom in the contrivance, of his spotless holiness and inflexible justice in the execution, and of his infinite mercy, grace, and love, in the application of this wonderful scheme for saving a lost and ruined race. All these perfections are more gloriously displayed in the work of redemption, than they are in the work of creation, or in the work of providence. This might be shown, but it would require a long discussion. Hear the language of Scripture on the subject: "In whom are hid

* John xvi. 8—11.

all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" "But God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us: unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."*

SECTION VI.

THE CONSUMMATION OF REDEMPTION.

There is a destined consummation of this great work on earth. It is predicted by the prophets in the most glowing strains. "And I saw in the night visions," says Daniel, "and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days; and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations

* Col. ii. 3. Eph. iii. 10. Rom. xi. 33. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. iii. 17—21.

and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. "The kingdoms of this world," says John, "are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."*

But the entire consummation of the work of redemption, is reserved for the next world. When time shall end, and the last saint shall have been brought into the church, and fitted for heaven, then will the great Redeemer complete his glorious work of salvation. Then his temple will be seen rising in all its beautiful proportions and grandeur, to the admiration of an assembled universe. The appointed hour arrived, "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."† Seated on the throne of his glory, and attended by all his holy angels, he will separate his redeemed people from the wicked, and place them, collected out of all nations, from the beginning to the end of time, on his right hand; and at the close of

* Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27. Rev. xi. 15; xix. 6, 7. † 1 Thess. iv. 16.

the final judgment, pronounce their acquittal and adjudication to eternal life. And when the unnumbered millions, redeemed by the blood of Christ, arrayed in the white robes of righteousness, and adorned with their crowns of immortality, purified from all the guilt and stain of sin, saved from all the miseries of an eternal hell, and exalted to all the happiness and glory of an eternal heaven, shall be presented to the Father, and surrounding the throne shall, in the highest heaven, ascribe " blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever; " * then will be consummated the glorious achievement which the Son of God undertook, and accomplished by his humiliation, sufferings, and death.

SECTION VII.

THE ARGUMENT FROM A REVIEW.

Such is the work of redemption. So it is described in Holy Scripture. Take again a comprehensive view of it. It originated in eternity. Its development required four thousand years, a system of types and of prophecy running through that long track of ages. The predicted Redeemer was exhibited as the Son of God, the mighty God, the everlasting Jehovah, the prophet, priest and king of the church. In fulfilment of the promises and predictions he came in the fulness of time, and assumed our nature into personal union with his divine nature; and thus, as our Immanuel, executed the offices of prophet, priest, and king. His great salvation is applied by his word, and ministry, and Spirit; the blessings of which, bestowed

* Revelation v. 13.

on unnumbered millions of our race, are eternal happiness and endless glory. Its result is the highest glory of God, and a vast increase of happiness to all intelligent and holy beings. Such is the representation of the work given in the Bible. Is it not worthy of God ? and is it not seen, in its own light, to be his work ? Was not the conception of this plan far beyond the reach of the human mind ?

Man had four thousand years in which to contrive a scheme of salvation, and what was the work of his philosophy and learning ? What could man offer as an atonement for his sins ? Slaughtered animals, and costly gifts to idol gods. On what did he depend for acceptance with God ? On his poor polluted deeds, his superficial virtues. The idea of a *gratuitous* salvation never entered his mind. He felt indeed the need of mercy ; but only as an auxiliary to his own works, on the merits of which he still relied. The whole history of divine providence could not furnish him with evidence, that pardoning mercy was an attribute of the Divine nature. That God is merciful, there were abundant proofs to be seen. No one could doubt the truth. But that he can exercise pardoning mercy, could not be learned from his dealings with our race ; because the last act that terminates his providence in this world, is an awful act of justice, destroying our mortal frame, and hurrying away our souls to judgment. Indeed, as the perfections of God are discovered either from his works, or from his revelation, we may believe his holy angels could not know pardoning mercy to be an attribute of his nature, before they had seen it exercised in the forgiveness of sinners, or had received a revelation announcing to them the cheering and delightful truth.

To devise a scheme of redemption was beyond the power of the human intellect. To be qualified for this would require a full knowledge of all the divine perfections, and the whole extent of evil done by sin to God's moral government; for, without such knowledge, no creature could tell, what punishment the honour of his offended majesty, and of his government, required to be inflicted on the transgressor; or by what means divine displeasure might be turned away from him, and his sins remitted, consistently with the demands of justice, and the stability and honour of God's government.

Much less could man conceive the amazing scheme of redemption revealed in the Bible. How could the thought enter into his mind, that his offended Sovereign should love guilty, vile, polluted, and rebellious creatures so much, as to send his own and well beloved Son into this fallen world, to take upon himself the form of a servant, to humble himself, to suffer, and to die upon a cross, to redeem a lost race from deserved punishment, and to bestow on them the enjoyment of eternal happiness. In this glorious scheme there is displayed such infinite love in the Father giving his own Son; such infinite grace in the Son, giving himself as a sacrifice; and such infinite condescension in the Holy Spirit, applying salvation and dwelling in our polluted hearts, as to place the conception of it far beyond the reach of the human intellect. The very fact of our possessing the idea, proves that it must have been revealed; so that being found in the Bible expanded in all its dimensions and parts from the first incipient discovery of the scheme to its execution and progress towards its final consummation, it evinces the Bible to contain a revelation

There is another view of this wondrous scheme that leads us to the same conclusion. We have seen that the person of our Redeemer is divine, and that he unites in his own person both the human and the divine natures. This amazing constitution of his person qualified him to be our Saviour. As man he became subject to the law, and obeyed its precepts and suffered its penalty. As God he sustained his human nature under an immense load of punishment, and imparted to his sufferings an infinite value ; so as to render what he endured, in a given time, equivalent to the everlasting punishment of all that shall be redeemed by him. But what mind could have formed the conception of such a person, thus combining the human and the divine natures, if it had not been revealed ? Is it not plain, that, without a revelation, the conception would have transcended far the limited powers of the human mind ? and is not the record of our Redeemer's person in the Bible a conclusive proof of its divine original ?

The work of redemption, then, like all the other works of God, is seen, in its own light, by considering its contrivance, development, execution, application, benefits and results, and final consummation, to be the work of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. The Bible that reveals it, is God's book. He has stamped his own image upon its inspired pages.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ADAPTATION OF THE BIBLE TO THE WANTS AND NECESSITIES
OF FALLEN MAN.

ONE of the strongest arguments to prove that the world was created and is governed by an infinitely wise and benevolent Being, is derived from the numberless and evident marks of design, so apparent in all its parts. How plainly does design appear in the position of the sun, which imparts light and heat to the earth; in the correspondence between the ascending vapours and the clouds they form; between the showers of rain and the growth of vegetables; between our senses and corresponding objects; the eye and light; the ear and sounds; the taste and food; between the structure of our limbs and the movements they perform!

The same kind of argument may be used in proving the inspiration and authority of the Bible. How manifestly adapted is it to the wants and necessities of our fallen nature! Let us contemplate the wants and necessities of man, and see how effectually and admirably the Bible meets and removes them.

SECTION I.

THE BIBLE DISPELS THE DARKNESS, AND REMOVES THE IGNORANCE
OF THE HUMAN MIND IN REGARD TO SPIRITUAL THINGS.

Fallen as man is, his intellect is still strong and vigorous. In the discoveries of science, in the invention of the various arts, and in the cultivation of literature, its vigour and strength have been displayed. But

in the knowledge of divine things its great weakness is mournfully apparent. To be convinced of this humbling truth, you are not to look at Christian nations, who enjoy the light of divine revelation, the reading of the Bible, and the ministry of the gospel, by which they have been raised to that enviable condition in which they rejoice. They know and acknowledge the true God. They are acquainted with the manner in which he is to be worshipped. To them the way of salvation has been shown; immortality brought to light; and a future state of rewards and punishments made manifest.

Beyond these favoured nations you must look, and contemplate the gloomy condition of heathen nations. How different! How deplorable! What darkness covers them! How ignorant are they of the very first principles of religion! They are ignorant of the God who made, sustains, and feeds them. Behold them prostrating themselves before dumb idols, gods of silver and gold, which their own hands have fashioned. See them worshipping these contemptible gods, with unclean and demoralizing rites. Egypt had her thirty-thousand gods, and Rome her Pantheon, which was open not only to her own, but to the idols of other nations. Some indeed among the ancient heathen "knew God; but they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things."* All the ancient philosophers degraded themselves, by

* Romans i. 21—23.

complying with the prevailing idolatry, and thus keeping the common people in their stupid ignorance. Even Socrates, the divine Socrates as he has been styled by admiring infidels, directed that a cock should, after his death, be sacrificed to Esculapius. In his last moments, instead of committing his soul to a faithful Creator, he placed it under the protection of an idol-god, who could neither hear his prayers, nor afford him help. He died, offering by his stupid idolatry, a gross insult to the true God.

Ignorant of God, the heathen are ignorant of his law. Its great principles are indeed written on their hearts ; so that they feel the workings of an accusing and excusing conscience. Still, however, their moral sense is sadly perverted. They are ignorant of many of their moral obligations. Blinded by sin, they often call *evil* good, and *good* evil. Of the manner in which God is to be worshipped they are entirely ignorant. The grave is shrouded in darkness. Not a ray of light is seen in the dark valley of death. The future world is entirely unknown. At death the heathen man plunges into a dark and awful abyss.

Such is the ignorance of all heathen nations. Our condition would have been as dark and gloomy as theirs, had not God in mercy given us the Bible. To its luminous and inspired pages we owe it, that we differ from them so greatly. The light beaming around our path came, not from human reason, but from divine revelation. From our infancy we have been pupils of the Bible. Through every period of life it has followed us with its heavenly instruction. How sublime its lessons in religion ! It has taught us that there is but one only living and true God ; the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost ; three divine persons

in one Godhead, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. It has spread before our admiring eyes all the infinite perfections and glories that belong to Him, as the eternal, independent, and immutable One. It has exhibited him to us as the Almighty Creator, who laid the foundations of the earth, and spread abroad the heavens like a curtain; as the Sovereign Ruler, who upholds and governs all things; as the bounteous Benefactor, who opens his hand and satisfies the wants of every living thing; and as the infinitely merciful Redeemer, who has provided salvation for a rebellious and ungrateful race of creatures. It has revealed the law of God, not only in compendious summaries, but in details of particular duties. It has taught us how to approach infinite Majesty in an acceptable manner, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. It has dispelled the darkness and gloom that rested on the tomb, and unveiled to the eye of faith all the blessedness and glories of the next world.

But more than external light is required to meet the necessity of our case. A man may be familiarly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and collect from them a correct, harmonious, and beautiful system of theology, and be able to discourse ably and eloquently of its heavenly doctrines; and yet, with all this speculative knowledge, be in spiritual darkness; blinded by his depravity, so as not to be able to see the beauty and excellency of divine truth. “The natural man (i. e. the unrenewed man,) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.”* The Bible does not overlook this necessity of our case. It teaches us how spiritual dark-

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

ness can be removed, and how spiritual light may be obtained. It leads us to the Holy Spirit, the fountain of light, and directs us to implore his gracious assistance in our extremity. It teaches us to adopt the prayer of David: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."* It is the office-work of the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding, to enable us to discern the beauty and excellence of divine truth. When he is pleased to illuminate our minds, then the different portions of divine truth stand forth to view; just as the various objects of the new created world were seen in all their loveliness and proportions, when the Creator commanded the light to shine out of darkness.† The soul thus illuminated by the Spirit finds itself in a new world, the objects of which it gazes upon with wonder and delight. With ineffable pleasure it looks on the cross of Christ, where the glory of God beams forth with the brightest splendour. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye known all things."‡

SECTION II.

MAN IS GUILTY, AND THE BIBLE SHOWS HOW HIS GUILT MAY BE REMOVED.

Man has committed innumerable violations of God's holy law; and he stands condemned by that law to suffer its tremendous penalty. Awakened to a sense of his guilt, the sinner will, under the pungency of

* Ps. cxix. 18. † 2 Cor. iv. 6. ‡ Matt. xi. 25. 1 John ii. 20.

deep convictions, exclaim, in the language of the prophet, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" How vain all the efforts of man to extricate himself from his overwhelming difficulties! How contemptible all his offerings to atone for his sins! God, his offended Sovereign, alone can deliver the wretched transgressor. We have seen that He has provided an ample atonement. He "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" for "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."* Hence the apostle was authorized to say to the anxious and convicted jailor, who, trembling with anguish, fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Such is the sovereign efficacy of the Redeemer's blood in taking away sin and all its fearful consequences, that the same apostle affirms, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." To him let every convicted sinner (the chief of sinners not excepted) come for deliverance from his heavy burden of guilt; for, says Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ

† Micah vi. 6, 7. John iii. 16. 1 John i. 7; ii. 2.

Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”*

SECTION III.

THE BIBLE FURNISHES THE BELIEVER WITH THAT PERFECT AND SINLESS RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH THE LAW OF GOD DEMANDS, AND OF WHICH SINFUL MAN IS UTTERLY DESTITUTE.

Man was created in the image of his Maker, in righteousness and true holiness. His heart was free from every moral stain, and filled with love to his Creator. The law under which he was placed required him to preserve his moral purity, and to continue in love to God ; and, as a test of his obedience, he was commanded to abstain from the fruit of only one tree, in that beautiful garden planted and adorned for his residence. He fell where he had full power to stand ; he failed in that obedience which he had ample ability to render. On fallen man the law acquired a new demand ; satisfaction for the dishonour done to its authority by sin. That the law urges this demand on all his fallen descendants, is perfectly plain from Holy Scripture ; “for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”† The conscience of every awakened sinner admits the truth and the justice of this demand.

But, let it not be forgotten, that this new claim of the law for satisfaction for disobedience, did not set aside the original claim for perfect obedience. By no means ; that claim remains in all its primitive force.

* Acts xvi. 28—31. Rom. viii. 1. 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. † Gal. iii. 10.

The law is not relaxed in its demands, to accommodate itself to the feebleness and depravity of our fallen nature. It prefers to us depraved creatures the same claims that it presented to our first parents, when they stood robed in innocence, and with hearts glowing with the warmest love and gratitude to their Creator. The language of the law is now the same that it was from its first announcement: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* Nothing more than this can be required. Here is perfection. Sin is incompatible with such love. Were this love reigning in our hearts, there could be no defect in our temper or conduct. We should act and feel towards our fellow creatures, just as we ought to feel and act; and we should render unto God that devout homage and spotless service, which we ought to render.

A perfect, sinless righteousness, then, be it remembered, is now, as it ever was, demanded from all men. Without such a righteousness no man ever did, or ever will enter into heaven. But can sinful men furnish this righteousness; and, arrayed in such spotless robes, go to the throne of their Judge, and claim the promised reward? By no means. A clear stream cannot flow from a polluted fountain. A sinner cannot be a righteous man on the ground of his own works. Hence the irresistible conclusion of the sacred writer, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the

* Matt. xxii. 37—40.

law is the knowledge of sin.”* The law that convicts a man of sin can never pronounce him righteous, or, in other words, declare him to be free from sin. The Jews made the vain attempt to justify themselves on the footing of their own obedience: for of them the apostle speaks, when he says, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”† Many have imitated their example. Refusing to accept the gratuitous method of justification revealed in the Bible, they have, in the pride of their hearts, relied on their own worthless righteousness for acceptance with God, and obtaining eternal life. Of course they have failed, and lost the prize. Man has not, nor can he work out, a righteousness sufficient to justify him in the sight of a holy God. Here he is a helpless creature.

The Bible meets this necessity, and offers us ample relief. It exhibits the spotless, finished righteousness which the great Redeemer wrought out, not for himself, but for us. This is called the righteousness of God, as in the passage quoted above, and in other places. It is thus denominated, for several reasons; because it was devised, revealed, offered, and is accepted by God, and was wrought out by his Son, who is God. The necessity and the bearing of this righteousness on our salvation, will appear from the following texts: “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being

* Romans iii. 20.

† Romans x. 3.

justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”*

That the righteousness spoken of is the righteousness of Christ, is evident; for it comes to believers through faith in him: and it will appear more evident from other passages. “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” The scope of the law is to lead sinners to Christ for righteousness. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made (become) the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Cor. iii. 21. “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works; saying,

* Romans iii. 21—26.

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." " And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification."*

Let it be observed that Christ is exhibited in these passages as the great object of faith; that we are justified freely by grace through his redemption; that he is the end of the law for righteousness to every believer; that Paul counted all things but loss for the knowledge of him, and desired above all things to be found in him, having that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ: that we are made, (become) the righteousness of God in him; and it will be seen, that, when it is said that faith is imputed, (counted,) for righteousness, we are not to understand the sacred writer as teaching that faith, as a work, is our righteousness; for he excludes all works of our own from the ground of our justification; and it would be absurd to regard a single work as the ground of our justification, when all others are rejected. Faith is merely the bond of our union with Christ, which gives us an interest in all his merits; the hand that accepts his righteousness for our justification: and in this sense it is counted or imputed to us for righteousness. A deed for a large tract of land might be set down as one portion of a man's wealth; although

* Phil. iii. 8, 9. Rom. x. 4; iv. 2—8, 21—25.

it is not the deed, but the possession of the land that really constitutes his wealth. So faith is set down as a believer's righteousness, and justifies him ; not because it really constitutes his justifying righteousness, but because it accepts and appropriates the righteousness of Christ for which he is justified. Here is the righteousness by which, as a glorious robe, the believer is covered and adorned. This hides all his sins ; and for this righteousness God can justify him, and yet be just, while he declares an ungodly man righteous ; not righteous in himself considered, but considered as united to Christ by faith, and having on his glorious righteousness, that has fulfilled all the demands of the law, and purchased for him eternal life. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound : that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."*

All this accords with the great principle of representation, which God was pleased to adopt in his dealings with our race from the beginning. So we are taught to believe by the apostle, who says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."†

SECTION IV.

THE BIBLE PROVIDES FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF THE BELIEVER.

4. That we are not what we ought to be, none will deny. But while men are ready to admit the existence of the disease, few are aware of its fatal charac-

* Rom. vi. 23; v. 20, 21.

† Ib. v. 19.

ter. In fact no book ever described it fully and correctly, but the book of God, who thoroughly knows the human heart, and all its windings and workings. There we find a lamentable description of its dreadful depravity.

Moses writing the history of the antediluvians, says, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." And after the deluge, the reason assigned by God why he would not destroy the earth again in the same manner is this: "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." David, centuries after Moses, says of himself, in his penitential confessions, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" and of his race he records this sad testimony: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The prophet Jeremiah, four hundred years after David, characterizes our nature thus: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" The apostle Paul entertained the same views of human nature; for he says of Christians, "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the

flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.”*

The Bible is the only book which has given a true description of our fallen nature. No man untaught by the Spirit of God, could have written on this subject, as the sacred writers have done. He alone knows perfectly the heart of man, and could disclose to them its hidden abominations, and the depth of its depravity. The description is graphic, and is seen to be so, by every one whose eyes have been opened to discover the secret workings of his own evil heart. The finger of God appears in detecting and exposing the dreadful disease of our nature; and it appears too in describing the nature of the cure.

Unenlightened men, sensible in some degree of the depravity of man, inculcate the necessity of repentance and reformation. Defective in their views of the malignity of the disease, they prescribe a cure altogether inadequate; just as a physician who, mistaking the malady of his patient, applies mild remedies, that serve only to allow it to gather strength, and break forth with new and greater violence. True, the Bible says, “Amend your ways and your doings;” and “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” But it says more; it says, “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.” “Make you a new heart and a new spirit.” “Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which

* Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21. Ps. li. 5; xiv. 2, 3. Jer. xvii. 9. Eph. ii. 1—3.

is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."*

The cure prescribed in the Bible corresponds with the deep and malignant nature of the disease. That prescribed by unenlightened reason is totally inadequate. A man may repent and reform; he may be sorry for the evil consequences of his sins, and break off from those that are disreputable and injurious to his health or estate: the intemperate man may become temperate; the licentious, chaste; the fraudulent, honest; the niggardly, liberal; the passionate, mild; and yet remain under the unbroken dominion of sin, destitute of spiritual life, devoid of love to God, and at enmity with him; and consequently unfit for that heaven into which the unclean shall not enter.

But how is this cure to be obtained? In the pride of their heart men may imagine they can effect their own cure, whenever they shall determine to put forth their native strength. The Bible speaks a different language, and lays the pride of man low in the dust.

Let the reader look at the passages just now quoted, and he will see, that the new creation of which they speak is God's work; the new heart his gift; and that he alone makes one man to differ from another. If therefore, we desire to be cured of the dreadful disease of sin, and to live a new life, we must seek the necessary blessing from God, by earnest, importunate prayer, offered in the name of Jesus our Redeemer. We must pray for the gift of his Holy Spirit, that he may produce in us a new heart, quicken us to a new and holy life; and that, having begun in us a good

* Jer. vii. 3. Isa. i. 16, 17. James iv. 8. Ez. xviii. 31. John iii. 5, 6. Eph. v. 4

work, he may carry it on till it be finally consummated in glory. To encourage such prayer, the Saviour says, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"*

SECTION V.

THE BIBLE INSPIRES THE BELIEVER WITH A FIRM AND UNWAVERING BELIEF OF AN OVERRULING PROVIDENCE.

Reason is sufficient to lead to the reception of this great truth. The belief of it lies at the foundation of all religious worship. But reason is not sufficient to sustain the mind against those shocks of unbelief, which arise from daily occurrences. We look abroad and see what may call up the question, Does infinite wisdom and impartial justice preside over the affairs of mortals? Vice triumphs, and virtue is depressed; piety mourns, while impiety rejoices; the oppressor tramples on the rights of the widow and the fatherless. Does God behold these scenes, and not interpose his mighty hand to correct such disorders? A thought like this, is sometimes painful to a good man. Asaph, under its pressure, was tempted to say, "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency!"†

The Bible comes to the relief of the tempted and doubting believer, by the clear and strong manner in which it asserts the great and consoling truth, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. John i. 12, 13. Eph. ii. 10. Luke xi. 13.

† Psalm lxxiii. 13.

round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.”* With what inimitable beauty and force does the Redeemer teach the extent of divine providence! “Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat; neither for the body what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much better are ye than the fowls. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”†

Further, the Bible not only asserts, in language so strong and emphatic, the certainty and the extent of divine providence, but cautions us to guard against the unbelief, springing from occurrences that God is pleased, for wise reasons, to allow to come to pass. “Fret not thyself because of evil doers; neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither

* Psalm xcvi. 1, 2.

† Luke xii. 23—30.

as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord ; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him : fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath : fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”*

Asaph tells us how he was delivered from his unbeliefing and perplexing thought. He went into the sanctuary of God: he saw their end; and exclaimed: “surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.”†

How salutary and consoling these admonitions! How encouraging to a cheerful and confiding trust in divine providence! In darkness the believer has light. In circumstances the most appalling to others he has reason to rejoice. Faith in the doctrines and promises of the Holy Scriptures certainly authorizes the adoption of the language of the prophet: “Al-

* Psalm xxxvii. 1—11.

† Ib. lxxiii. 18—20.

though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be found in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”*

SECTION VI.

THE BIBLE FURNISHES THE BELIEVER WITH SUPPORT AND CONSOLATION UNDER AFFLICTIONS.

Afflictions are the sad inheritance of the human family. “Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards.”† None can escape afflictions. Placed in such circumstances a wise man will look out for sources of support and consolation. What can reason say to the afflicted? Afflictions are to be expected. They come upon all. We must submit. Impatience will only increase their pain. How superior the consolations of the Bible! Hear its instructions and assurances. “For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then

* Hab. iii. 17, 18.

† Job v. 6, 7.

are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."*

As afflictions come from the love which God bears to his people, so they are moderated and accommodated to their weakness. "In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." "Like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are but dust." "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it."†

Afflictions too are beneficial. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." "And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto

* Lam. iii. 31—33. Heb. xii. 5—10.

† Isaiah xxvii. 8. Ps. ciii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. x. 13.

praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*

The righteous shall be delivered out of all their afflictions, and obtain a glorious reward for their patient endurance. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the ungodly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” “For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; for though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”†

SECTION VII.

THE BIBLE DELIVERS THE BELIEVER FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH, AND INSPIRES HIM WITH THE HOPE OF A BLESSED IMMORTALITY.

A man endowed with constitutional courage, may in the field of battle, brave death. But reason, though aided by strong and iron nerves, can deliver no man from the fear of death. Death is the king of terrors;

* Heb. xii. 11. Rom. v. 2, 3. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. James i. 2—4.

† 2 Pet. ii. 9. Ps. l. 15. 2 Cor. iv. 15—18.

and when he advances towards us, on a sick bed, with sure and steady steps, the bravest, unsupported by the hope of the gospel, will secretly quake, even while they affect an outward tranquillity, to hide from others their inward fears. Nothing but the gospel of Jesus Christ can strip death of its terrors, and inspire a dying man with a heavenly triumph in the final conflict. This the gospel can do; and it has done it in innumerable instances. One design of the death of Christ was to free his disciples from the distressing fear of death. So the author of the epistle to the Hebrews teaches us: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* Death is the wages of sin; and as Satan tempted our first parents to sin, and brought death into our world, so he obtained the empire of death, and rejoices in its destructive ravages. Christians must die like other men; but the nature of death is changed as to them. He comes to them as an angel of light, to deliver them from the calamities and sins of this life, and not as the king of terrors, to hurry them away to the place of torment. Believing in Christ their sins are all pardoned; his blood has cleansed them from all their guilt. They are also delivered from the law (which is the strength of sin) as a covenant of works, though not as a rule of life: being no longer under obligation to obey the law with a view to merit the favour of God; for this has been secured to them by the obedience of the Redeemer: but they observe it, because

* Hebrews ii. 14, 15.

they delight in it, and present their obedience to God, as a testimonial of love and gratitude to him for his redeeming love.* In these circumstances believers are authorized to indulge a well founded hope of happiness in the next world. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made an high priest after the order of Melchizedec." Being thus justified by faith, having peace with God, and enjoying so sure and stable a hope, the Christian has no reason to fear death; but confiding in the merits of his blessed Redeemer, and relying on his grace, he may welcome death, and sing the triumphant song: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? For the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."†

Believers need not fear to enter the next world; for there their Saviour reigns, and has prepared mansions for them. How cheering his language on this subject! "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to pre-

* Rom vii. 4, 6. † Ib. v. 1, 2. Heb. vi. 17—20. 1 Cor. xv. 55—57.

pare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Nor need they fear the judgment; for the Judge will be their friend. He will place them on his right hand; and at the close of the judgment he will say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world." "The righteous shall go away into life eternal."*

Thus we have seen how adapted the Bible is to the wants and necessities of our fallen nature. It has dispelled the darkness, and removed the ignorance that rests upon heathen minds, in regard to spiritual things; and it provides for that spiritual illumination, which is as necessary as an external revelation. We are guilty, and liable to condemnation by that holy law which we have violated; but the Bible assures us, that, by believing in Christ, we shall receive full remission, and be delivered from condemnation. We are destitute of that perfect righteousness, without which there is no admission into heaven; but the Bible furnishes us with the spotless and finished righteousness of the Redeemer, which is given to all who believe and accept the all-gracious offer. We are deeply depraved, and destitute of spiritual life; but the Bible teaches us how we may obtain spiritual life, how our corruptions may be subdued and mortified, and how a work of sanctification may be begun and carried on, till it be perfected in glory. The Bible is the only book which has given a true description of depraved human nature; the only book which teaches the full and radical cure of the dreadful malady, and

* John xiv. 2, 3. Matt. xxiv. 33, 34, 46.

where that cure is to be found, and how it is to be applied. We need to have our minds firmly and unwaveringly settled in the belief of an overruling providence; and the Bible produces this desirable belief. We need support and consolation under afflictions; and the Bible supplies us with ample support and rich consolation. We need deliverance from the fear of death, and the hope of a blessed immortality in the coming world; and the Bible affords this deliverance, and inspires this blessed hope.

How admirably is the Bible adapted to our wants and necessities, as fallen, sinful, and miserable creatures! What palpable marks of *design* in its provisions, and what bright displays of wisdom in its doctrines! Is it not God's book? Does it not bear the impress of his image? What but infinite Wisdom could have devised a scheme so suited to our condition, and so full of hope and blessedness to fallen man? An intelligent man, a legal character, one of the judges of Pennsylvania, who had been inclined to scepticism, said, on his dying bed, to the writer, "The doctrines taught in your church, are not the doctrines of man. They are too full of wisdom to be the production of the human mind. They came from infinite wisdom. They are divine." And so will every one say who studies the Bible, and desires to know the truth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

THE influence of the Bible on the character and happiness of man, is most salutary and powerful. It is felt on all his relations, and on human society in all its forms. The consideration of this subject will furnish another evidence of the heavenly origin of the sacred Scriptures.

SECTION I.

INFLUENCE IN FORMING MAN'S CHARACTER.

The Bible contemplates man as a fallen, sinful, and miserable being ; alienated from God, and lying under the condemnatory sentence of his violated law. To recover him from this deplorable condition, it begins its benevolent work, by calling him to repentance and faith. In preaching his gospel, the Redeemer said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* To lead sinners to repentance, the Bible sets before them that most holy law which they have broken, in all its spirituality and extent, and thunders out that terrible curse by which its honour is guarded. It reveals the majesty and grandeur, the holiness and justice, the power and jealousy of that Lawgiver, whom the sinner has dared to insult. It tells him how deeply he has become depraved; that he has lost every spark of holiness.

* Mark i. 15.

ness and spiritual life, and is so enslaved by sin, that he cannot deliver himself from its dreadful bondage; and yet it continually sounds in his ears the great command, "Repent, and believe the gospel."

When the sinner is awakened, and becomes sensible that he cannot save himself, and feels constrained to put forth the anxious inquiry of the Philippian jailor, "What must I do to be saved?" the Bible gives the same reply which Paul gave to that convicted heathen, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And to encourage him to believe, it discourses to him of the character and offices, of the work and sufficiency of the great Redeemer, of his love and compassion. It addresses to him the tender invitation of Christ, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and the assurance, "wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* When he is oppressed with a sense of utter unworthiness, it discovers the entire freeness of the gospel, and that no merit is required of the sinner: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." "And the Spirit and the bride, say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but for the sins of the

* Matt. xi. 28. Heb. vii. 25.

whole world.”* Still further to relieve his weakness and helplessness, the Bible tells the desponding sinner, that as faith is the gift of God, he may implore this gift from God, and beseech him to work it in his heart.†

Believing in Christ, the sinner now most heartily repents. In the cross he sees the odious and malignant nature of sin; his heart breaks, and melts within him; he feels the operations of that “godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.”‡

Having repented and believed on Christ, the sinner is freely forgiven. All his sins are blotted out. He is reconciled unto God, and fully restored to his favour and friendship. Placed in this state of gracious acceptance, freed from condemnation, and rejoicing in God, he cannot but exclaim from the fulness of a grateful heart, “What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?” In reply the Bible presses on him the great commandment, which requires us to love God supremely with all our powers; and directs him to contemplate his glory shining in creation and providence, and especially in redemption, that he may see how infinitely lovely are the perfections of God, and how infinitely worthy he is of the warmest and most ardent affections of the human heart. It addresses him in the language of Paul: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:

* Isa. iv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 John ii. 2.

† Eph. ii. 8.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."*

Thus distinctly is set before the penitent believer the great end of his being and existence, the glory of God; and he feels, that to promote this end he is sacredly bound to spend his time, to employ all his powers and influence, and to arrange all his affairs. In commencing this work, he feels constrained to make an open and public profession of religion. He cannot leave it any longer in doubt where he stands, whether on the Lord's side, or on that of the world. Assuming the requisite courage, he breaks through all opposition in doing the necessary act of renouncing the world, and of declaring himself a disciple and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. He does it by participating in that special ordinance instituted for this purpose, and to be a badge of discipleship.

* Rom. vi. 11—14. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Rom. xiv. 7—9. 1 Cor. x. 31.

Thus devoted to God, and reconciled to him through Jesus Christ, the believing Christian will carefully attend to the discharge of all the duties which he owes to God. Mere outward homage, whether shown in family or public worship, will not satisfy his conscience. He knows that God claims the worship of the heart: for the Redeemer has said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” He will therefore cherish and cultivate that reverential fear, that submission to the divine will, that trust in the care and protection of God, that delight in him, that holy love, which the Scriptures require. Sustaining the relation of a son to God, he will endeavour to feel and act in a way, that will correspond to this endearing and ennobling relation. In his private devotions he will try to make that near approach to God which he graciously allows to his children, by entering into the holiest of all, “through the rent veil, the flesh of Christ;” and there, with filial boldness and believing confidence, chastened with profound reverence, to converse with infinite Majesty, seated on the mercy seat, and implore for himself and others all needed blessings. He will not forget what the Saviour said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;” but will endeavour to furnish a convincing proof of its truth, by a practical regard to the apostolic exhortation: “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”*

There are personal duties inculcated in the Bible. By disposing a Christian to the practice of these, it

* Heb. iv. 14—16; ix. 8. John xvii. 16. Rom. xii. 3.

carries on the formation of his character. To remark that it prohibits the violation of the marriage bed, and all sexual intercourse not sanctified by the marriage contract, would be saying little in favour of its pure morality. It goes much further; it condemns those secret desires and lusts which the morality of the world overlooks. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”* Thus the Bible forms a chaste character, by enjoining as a duty, the suppression of the first rising of lustful desire.

Temperance, as taught in the Bible, does indeed say, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”† But it demands much more. It teaches us in eating and drinking to use no more than the proper nourishment of our physical frame may require; not to take any quantity that would impede the due operations of the mind. Taught by the holy Scriptures, a Christian will, if he sees that he can promote the best interests of others, and save the intemperate, abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage.‡

That industry is commended and commanded in the Scriptures, is well known to all who read the Bible. But while we attend diligently to the business of our calling, we are to prosecute it without anxiety; leaving it with God our heavenly Father, to

* Matt. v. 28.

† Luke xxi. 34.

‡ Rom. xiv. 20, 21. 1 Cor. viii. 13.

dispose of our affairs as his infinite wisdom may judge best. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.”*

Contentment with our lot and circumstances is especially required as a duty in the Bible. “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” A Christian may be poor, and thus be led to fear he may not obtain his daily food; but the Saviour says, “Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.” And his apostle says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”†

The Bible reminds us that our life on earth is a pilgrimage, that we are “sojourners as were all our fathers;” and on this ground we are directed to “set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth;” “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”‡

Finally; universal purity is enjoined by the Bible. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”§

In regard to the duties we owe to others, were we to present all the details which are found in the Bible,

* Phil. iv. 6, 7. † Heb. xiii. 5. Luke xii. 29, 30. 1 Tim. vi. 6.

‡ 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Col. iii. 2.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

the quotations would become tedious. Only one or two general rules will be noticed. There is that comprehensive one which enlists our selfishness on the side of others, and sheds so clear a light on our path: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Justly is this denominated the Saviour's golden rule. But no mere outward performance of duties, however sufficient to satisfy the claims of the world's code, will satisfy those of the Bible. This sacred book requires a right state of feeling, as well as a right train of action, towards our neighbour. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, is the second great command." By that inimitable parable concerning the good Samaritan, our Saviour has taught us who is our neighbour; that the term comprehends all sects and nations; and that our love is to be withheld from none, but extended even to our enemies. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."^{*}

Among Christians there exists a peculiar relation. United to Christ by faith they form one body, and are members of the same family, in whom dwells the same divine Spirit. Duties corresponding to this near and endearing relation, are enjoined in the Bible. "A new commandment," said Jesus, "I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." This duty is repeatedly urged by his apostles. "Let bro-

* Luke x. 25—37. Matt. v. 44, 45.

therly love continue," says Paul; and Peter, "Love as brethren;" and John, "This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." Brotherly love is, by the Redeemer, exhibited as the badge of discipleship: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another :" and by his apostle John, as an evidence of regeneration: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. So strong should this love be as to render us willing, when called to the sacrifice by divine providence, "to lay down our lives for the brethren."*

Such is the character which the Bible impresses more or less upon all who sincerely and cordially believe its heavenly truths. By its powerful influence on their minds and hearts, they are inclined to cultivate the graces, and to practise the duties we have noticed. Is not this truly a lovely and excellent character? What a delightful summary of Christian duties in one comprehensive sentence has Paul given! "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."†

This truly excellent and lovely character, is formed *instrumentally* by the precepts of the Bible; enforced by the most powerful motives, and recommended by the bright examples exhibited in the lives of eminent

* John xiii. 34. Heb. xiii. 1. 1 Pet. iii. 8. 1 John iii. 23. John xiii. 35. 1 John iii. 14; iii. 16.

† Phil. iv. 8.

saints, and the finished and most perfect example of our Lord and Saviour: but *efficiently* created by the grace of that Holy Spirit, whom the Bible reveals; and to whose gracious aid we are directed by it to look for a new heart, and every grace and virtue that can adorn the Christian character.

SECTION II.

INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE IN PROMOTING MAN'S HAPPINESS.

The Bible presents to the believing Christian numerous sources of enjoyment. The change produced by faith in his relative state, his sanctification, his adoption, his trust in God, his support and consolation under afflictions, his hope of heaven, are all so many sources of pure enjoyment.

1. The change produced in a sinner's relative state by faith.

This is truly great and wonderful. He was an enemy to God, but he is now his friend; God is reconciled to him. He was condemned, but now he is freely and fully pardoned, and delivered from the dreadful sentence of condemnation. He was an alien from the family of God, but now he is an adopted member of it. He was a slave to Satan, but now he enjoys the freedom of Christ. He was standing on the brink of perdition, but now his feet are treading the path of life. He was destitute of hope, but now he has the hope of heaven. What a wonderful change! Has not every one who has experienced it abundant reason to rejoice? A criminal who, on the day appointed for his execution, receives a pardon, and is permitted to depart from his prison, rejoices greatly. But much greater reason has a pardoned sinner, set free from the condemnatory

sentence of the divine law, to rejoice. Sometimes, indeed, individuals passing through this great change, have such vivid impressions of things, such terrific apprehensions of their danger, and are delivered so suddenly, and have so strong a conviction of their deliverance, and such an assurance of God's reconciled favour and forgiving love, that they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This high degree of joy will indeed subside. But reflection on this change will be a source of pleasure.

2. The Christian's sanctification is another spring of enjoyment.

Sin has disturbed the peace of the soul, and introduced into it the war of conflicting elements. The harmonious movement of its power is gone. Wicked and disorderly passions have been gendered, which awaken and irritate conscience. These passions are the cause of continual unhappiness. Pride exposes a man to constant disappointments and mortification. Envy corrodes peace of mind. Hatred revolves dark and gloomy thoughts. Revenge fires the soul with desperate designs and bloody deeds. The Bible condemns these wicked passions, and requires their subjugation and final extirpation; and just in proportion as a Christian is sanctified, their subjugation is effected, and their extirpation carried on; and in their place are substituted the opposite affections of benevolence, forgiveness, love, humility, and meekness; so that while the Christian escapes the pains produced by the indulgence of wicked passions, he receives the pleasurable emotions that spring from the opposite affections which he cherishes and cultivates. These are, in their own nature, delightful, and at the same time well pleasing to God. "A meek and quiet spirit" is an ornament

"in the sight of God of great price." "Be clothed with humility," says Peter; "for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

3. The Christian's adoption into God's family is a fruitful source of enjoyment.

"Behold," says John in holy admiration, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." To assure believers of their adoption, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God;" "and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."* Astonishing grace! Wonderful condescension! Admirable relation! Is not this happiness? A believing sinner is permitted to look up to the great Jehovah, the Creator and Possessor of the universe, and call him Father! Being a child he has access to him at all times; and may daily enter into the holiest of all, and converse by prayer and thanksgiving and praise, with infinite Majesty on the mercy-seat, with the freedom of a child, and with the confidence of faith. He may ask what he will, and if he believe, he will receive a gracious answer.† What expectations may not a man indulge who has for his Father, the King of the universe!

4. The Christian's trust in God is another source of enjoyment.

He believes that the Lord reigns, over this and all worlds; that he knows and sees all things and

* 1 John iii. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 16. Gal. iv. 6. † John xiv. 13, 14.

events; and that nothing can take place without his sovereign permission. Promises of the most encouraging kind are given to inspire his heart with a believing confidence. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him: and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* By such gracious and condescending promises does God encourage his children to put their trust in him, at all times, and for every thing they need. With what believing confidence may they repose themselves on his care and kindness? What a source of comfort and enjoyment is trust in their heavenly Father!

5. The support and consolation which the Bible affords to believers under afflictions, is another spring of enjoyment.

In a preceding chapter, it was shown that it teaches us to regard afflictions as coming from the love which God bears to his people; that they are needful to them; that they are wisely suited to their state, and are proportioned to their strength; that they are de-

* Ps. xxxvii. 3—6; lxxxiv. 11, 12. Phil. iv. 6.

signed for their spiritual benefit and improvement; and that, after believers have endured them for a time, they will be delivered from them. Here is ample support; here is rich consolation. It is not without reason that James says, " My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations ; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."*

6. Finally, the hope of future happiness is a rich source of pure enjoyment.

In illustrating this particular we refer the reader to John xiv. 1–3. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. chapter v. 1–4; quoted in chapter ii. page 181; and only add what follows the last. " Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."†

So firmly is the foundation laid for a believer's hope in regard to the next world, and so confidently may he indulge the hope of seeing the Lord, and entering on " the inheritance of the saints in light." What a support is this blessed hope against the fear of death! Death can do a Christian no harm. Does it deprive him of his earthly wealth? It puts him into possession of heavenly and eternal riches. Does it remove him from his friends? It connects him with better and nobler friends. Does it take him from the church on earth? It brings him to the church in heaven. Does it separate him from the means of grace? It conveys him to a place where he will not need these means.

* James i. 2, 3.

† 2 Cor. v. 5–8.

Does it remove him from this sinful world? It leads him to a world of glory. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

SECTION III.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE ON DOMESTIC SOCIETY.

Its influence on domestic society is certainly most salutary and happy. In Christian countries the change produced by the sacred Scriptures, is very perceptible and most beneficial. The Bible, wherever its authority is admitted, has put an end to *polygamy*. This is eminently conducive to domestic happiness. The injurious effects of having more than one wife, appeared in the families of Jacob, Elkanah, David, and Solomon. — This custom always has been destructive to domestic peace and comfort, and always will be so. Strife and contention will exist not only between the rival wives, but also between the sets of children. No man can love two or more wives, as he ought to love his wife; nor can he render to them the duty which he owes to one wife. At the original institution of marriage, one woman was given to one man; and the reason assigned by the prophet for this, was a regard for the instruction and training of children. "And did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit; and wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed."*

Another safeguard thrown around domestic life, by the Bible, is the wise restriction laid on divorce. No man is allowed to put away his wife, except for one cause, and that is fornication.† Wherever the

* Mal. ii. 15.

† Matthew v. 32.

liberty of divorce is extended beyond the limits set by our Saviour, the purity, peace, and happiness of the married life, are impaired. Marriages will be contracted without due reflection; divorces will multiply, and draw down upon children all their evil consequences. But when it is known that a dissolution of the marriage contract can be obtained only for one cause, greater care will be taken in selecting partners for life; severer restraints will be laid on wandering desires; more forbearance will be exercised by husband and wife, and kinder feelings will be cherished toward each other.

The relative position both of the husband and of the wife, is clearly defined by the sacred Scriptures, and their duties accurately stated. Submission, reverence, and obedience, are the duties enjoined on the wife. Love, tenderness, and honour, are required from the husband towards the wife.*

The authority attributed to parents over their children, by the Bible, is sufficient for the exercise of due government; but it is limited. Parents are required to provide for their children, to correct them, to avoid provoking them to wrath, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.† Children are required to honour and obey their parents, to listen to their instructions, and to observe their commandments.‡

In like manner the sacred Scriptures state distinctly the duties of masters towards their servants, and of servants towards their masters. How obviously these precepts accord with the relations on which they are

* Ephes. v. 22—24, 25—33. Col. iii. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 7.

† 1 Tim. v. 8. Prov. xiv. 18. Ephes. vi. 4.

‡ Ephes. xx. 12. Prov. i. 8; iv. 1; vi. 20. Ephes. vi. 1.

founded, and how eminently conducive are they to secure the peace, comfort, and happiness of domestic life!

Suppose the different members of a family, husband and wife, parents and children, the heads and domestics, were all, under the influence of religion, to practise carefully their respective duties, as enjoined in the Bible, what a blessed family would it be! Peace and harmony, love and kindness, would reign in it; discord, contention, and strife would flee away. It would be an image of heaven.

Extend the supposition. Suppose all the members of a community were faithfully to practise the duties enjoined on them in the Bible, would not that community be but a larger and blessed family? Extend the supposition to a nation, and you see a still larger family of love and happiness. Carry the supposition around the globe, and you have one blessed family spread through every quarter and clime of the earth; all united by the bonds of brotherly love; all dwelling in peace and happiness; all worshipping the same universal Parent and Creator; all rejoicing in the same blessed Redeemer; all exulting in hope of the same glorious inheritance. Where now are wars and garments rolled in blood? They have ceased. Where are prisons and dungeons, bars and bolts and chains? Become unnecessary, the former are demolished; the latter, converted into other forms, are used for agricultural purposes.

Is not that book, which imparts to a believing man a character so benevolent, so elevated, so noble, and which is so conducive to his personal happiness; a book which so guards the purity, the peace, the comfort, the happiness of domestic life; a book, which, if it were

believed and duly regarded by all men, would convert the whole earth into a paradise of peace, innocence, and love—is not this book divine? Is it not the work of infinite wisdom and goodness? Is it not the precious gift of God to his erring, sinful, wandering, and wretched creatures; to reclaim them from their wanderings, to lead them in right paths, and to conduct them to heaven? Truly said Paul, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

CONCLUSION.

Let the reader now take a brief comprehensive view of the proofs, that have, in this volume, been presented, of the truth and divine authority of the Bible.

1. We have considered the plan which infinite wisdom was pleased to adopt, in communicating a revelation to our fallen race. The Bible is composed of numerous smaller books, written by men of various habits of life, and various culture of mind; living in different periods, and some many ages apart. The books of the Old Testament, when written, were delivered to the Jewish nation for safe keeping, and those of the New Testament, to the Christian church. The truth of God's revelation was professedly established by *miracles* and by *prophecies*; a test to which no other religion that has gained a footing in the world, was ever subjected. Such a plan suited the divine Author of our holy religion, who lives through all time, and can control and use as he pleases all minds; but

was wholly unsuited for the establishment of an imposture; a plan which no individual impostor, nor combination of impostors, would dare to adopt; because they could not possibly act on it with success.

2. The miracles wrought by Moses, and by Jesus Christ, and his apostles, were plain and palpable miracles, astonishingly great and innumerable. They were wrought, not in private, before a few select friends, but in the most public manner, and before enemies as well as friends. They challenged investigation. No one could discover any fallacy in them. Enemies could not contradict them. All who saw them were compelled to admit their reality. They furnished those who wrought them with the clearest and most indisputable evidence, that they were commissioned by God to act as his ambassadors, and to deliver his messages.

3. A spirit of prophecy pervaded the church, from Moses to Malachi, the last prophet under the Old Testament; and from our blessed Redeemer to John, who wrote the book of Revelations. We have seen the recorded fulfilment of many predictions, and the fulfilment of that class of prophecies concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ, found in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and the psalms of David.

4. We have seen how interesting and important are the instructions contained in the Bible in regard to God and man; and that what it teaches of the divine perfections, and of God, as the Creator, Preserver, Sovereign, and final Judge of the world, and of the natural, moral, and future history of man, is all consonant to the dictates of enlightened reason. These instructions were delivered by men living in different ages, and in circumstances widely different, some of

them plain unlettered men; and yet all harmonize in what they teach, and deliver their messages without hesitation, and with the confidence of men assured they are speaking the truth. The matter, the manner, and the harmony of their communications, all prove they were inspired by the Holy Ghost, to deliver God's messages to his sinful and erring creatures.

5. The moral code of the Bible is truly admirable and divine. It is so elevated and spiritual, so pure and holy, so compendious, and yet so particular, that, from its superiority over all other systems, from its perfection, from its exemption from the debasing effects of human depravity, and from the provision made for securing its observance, we have derived conclusive arguments in favour of its divine original and authority.

6. The work of redemption, as exhibited in the Bible, in its origin in the eternal counsels of the Holy Trinity, in its development, in its execution, in its application, in its benefits and results, and in its final consummation, evidently bears the impress of its divine Author; and, like all his other works, is seen, in its own light, to be the work of God. The conception of it never would nor could have entered the human mind, if it had not been revealed.

7. The adaptation of the instructions and doctrines of the Bible to the wants and the necessities of mankind, furnishes clear proof that it came from infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy.

8. And finally, the beneficial influence of the Bible in forming the character, and in promoting the happiness of man, and its beneficial influence on domestic life, and human society, in all its forms, clearly points to the great and heavenly source from which this

sacred influence comes, and proves the Bible to be divine.

Now, when all these proofs are combined into one view and dwelt upon, do they not conclusively and irresistibly evince the Bible to be God's book, written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and that we are bound to praise him for this heavenly light, which he has thrown upon our path, to guide us to eternal life and happiness?

To these questions the reader may be ready to give an affirmative answer. He may have a deep, unwavering conviction of the divine truth and authority of the Bible; he may sincerely believe that it contains a revelation from God; and yet be destitute of that faith which saves the soul. A speculative faith may be of service to him in this world, in restraining the corrupt propensities and evil passions of his nature; but it will not put him in possession of that great salvation which the Bible reveals and offers. The revelation of God demands a different reception; it must be embraced with the heart. Reader, you may study the Bible, so as to become well acquainted with its interesting and varied contents; you may so learn its doctrines as to be able to state them in a clear and consistent manner, and to defend them ably and successfully; and yet be blind to the beauty and excellency of divine truth. "The natural man (that is, the unrenewed man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned." To see the beauty, excellency, and glory of divine truth, spiritual illumination is needed. To understand the doctrines of divine revelation, in a saving manner, they must be taught by the Holy Spirit in the

inner mind. It is his province, like the rising sun to throw a glorious light over the firmament of divine truth, and to show every object in that firmament clearly and distinctly. In this internal and heavenly light, you must see and contemplate the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus seen, they will appear wise, lovely, and captivating. In this light you must see yourself, and discover your sinfulness and guilt, your wretchedness and helplessness. In this light you must see the excellency of that law which you have violated, the infinite majesty of the Lawgiver whom you have insulted, and the dreadful nature of that curse which you have incurred. Thus convicted, confounded, and abashed, you must prostrate yourself in the dust of humiliation, and sincerely repent of all your sins. In this light you must contemplate the Saviour, and see his fulness and loveliness, his suitableness and all-sufficiency. Captivated with the view, you must commit yourself into his hands; taking him to be your prophet, priest, and king; relying on his atonement and righteousness for acceptance with God, and justification in his sight; willing to be saved by him on his own terms and in his appointed way, and to give all the glory of your salvation to his free, rich, and sovereign grace.

This is the faith which the Scriptures require; a faith wrought in the soul by the blessed Spirit; a faith that unites to the Redeemer, and secures an interest in all his merits and grace; a faith that "works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world." Thus believe, and you will be assured by your personal experience that the gospel is true: for says the apostle, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath

the witness in himself.”* Be satisfied with no inferior faith. Beseech God most earnestly and importunately to work, by his Holy Spirit, this faith in your heart. For “he that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”†

* 1 John v. 10.

† John iii. 18.

THE END.









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